



# SCYTHIAN ART



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# SCYTHIAN ART

THE LEGACY  
OF THE SCYTHIAN WORLD:  
MID-7th TO 3rd CENTURY B.C.

AURORA ART PUBLISHERS · LENINGRAD

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# Foreword

In archaeology, the term 'Scythians' is generally used to refer to the tribes which inhabited the steppes adjacent to the northern shores of the Black Sea. There is also a broader concept of 'the Scythian world', considered as a conglomeration of various tribes sharing a common economic and cultural life and inhabiting a vast territory.

The study and excavation of Scythian burial sites in the territory to the north of the Black Sea coast began over two hundred years ago. In 1763 a large mound was unearthed near Yelizavetgrad (now Kirovograd) in the Ukraine. It yielded many precious objects of gold and silver of the early Scythian period (late seventh and sixth centuries B.C.). These artifacts were taken to the *Kunstkammer* (Chamber of Curios) in St. Petersburg, founded by Peter the Great as Russia's first museum. The *Kunstkammer* already possessed a number of gold artifacts in the Scythian style which had been discovered in Siberian barrows. They had been presented to Peter the Great by Nikita Demidov, a rich manufacturer in the Urals (in 1715), and by Matvei Gagarin, governor of Tobolsk (in 1716). In 1859 all the archaeological collections of the *Kunstkammer* were moved to the Hermitage.

The systematic study of Scythian antiquities started with the excavation of the Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch in 1830. A rich burial of the fourth century B.C. was discovered there in a stone sepulchre. It contained many priceless works of Greek jewellery, including a magnificent gold torque (rope necklace) with sculptured figures of horsemen at its ends and a ritual vessel of electrum (an alloy of silver and gold) depicting four groups of Scythians. These scenes may illustrate a legend recorded by Herodotus which relates how the three sons of Heracles (apparently identical to the first Scythian king, Targitaus) decided the question of succession by stringing his bow.

*Pls. 126, 127*

*Pls. 184–187*

Excavations of barrows in the Ukraine and the North Caucasus intensified after the establishment of the Imperial Archaeological Commission in 1859. The main office of the commission was in the building of the Hermitage, and the most valuable finds were handed over to that museum. In 1863 the Chertomlyk barrow, whose huge dimensions (it was 20 m high) had attracted the attention of scientists for a long time, was unearthed in the Ukraine. During its excavation archaeologists discovered a fine silver amphora with friezes of Scythians taming wild horses. Excavations of the Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow were carried out between 1864 and 1868. This barrow was apparently a family sepulchre since it had several vaults. One of the vaults contained a number of articles supposedly belonging to a priestess of Demeter, the goddess of fertility, and numerous gold adornments from the ritual dress usually worn by a woman of high birth.

*Pls. 265, 266*

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the majority of archaeological finds were made in the North Caucasus and especially in the territory along the Kuban river. Here, in the vicinity of the Cossack village of Ulsky, at a depth of fifteen metres, archaeologists discovered the remains of a wooden structure. Three hundred and sixty skeletons of horses were lying around the pillars and hitching-posts. Although the Scythians are known to have sacrificed horses to their deities, no group of that size had ever been found before. Further searches are being conducted in the area.

Excavations of the six Kelermes barrows carried out in 1903 and 1904 were of great importance for the study of early Scythian culture. They yielded extraordinarily interesting materials which confirmed the Scythians' ties with the Ancient Orient. The artifacts included an *akinakes* (a short iron sword) with its gold mount and scabbard decorated with imaginary beasts in an old Oriental style. The only other sword of that type was found in the Ukraine in 1763. Objects of purely Scythian craftsmanship were also found at Kelermes. One of these, a shield ornament, shows a gold panther whose paws and tail are ornamented with stylized images of curled-up predatory beasts. Another gold shield ornament, bearing the image of a recumbent stag with large foliated antlers, was found in the village of Kostromskaya on the Kuban in 1897. Stylized images of various animals were traditional in Scythian art.

*Pls. 32–35*

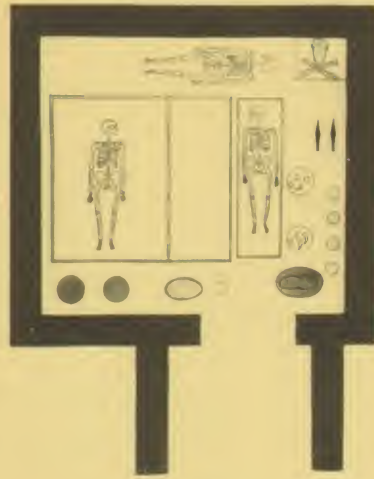
*Pl. 17*

*Pl. 16*



Excavation of the Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow in 1864

Plan of the burial in the Kul-Oba barrow



Pls. 128, 129

While at the turn of the century new archaeological discoveries were being made almost every year in the North Caucasus and along the Kuban, rich archaeological finds in the Scythian barrows in the Ukraine had become very rare. It seemed that all the important barrows in the area had already been dug up or pillaged, and that further excavations would require enormous effort while promising but poor results.

Nevertheless, new excavations were undertaken in 1912 and 1913 at the site of the Solokha barrow on the left bank of the Dnieper near Nikopol. One of the chambers of this barrow had not been ransacked and a famous gold comb, made by a Greek artist in the fourth century B.C., was found there. The comb is crested with sculptured figures of Scythians engaged in battle. The successful excavation of the Solokha barrow brought new hopes for further discoveries of Scythian artifacts in the Ukraine, but forty years were to pass before the hopes were realized.

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914 all the archaeological activity in the country came to a standstill, to be resumed only in the Soviet period when favourable conditions for archaeological work had been created. The Archaeological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR was put in charge of archaeological work in this territory. In 1954 a barrow of the fourth century B.C. was dug up near Melitopol and a remarkable *gorytus* (a case for bow and arrows) was found there in a cache. Its design appears to have been made from the same mould as was used for the *goryti* found in the Chertomlyk, Ilyinetskaya and Yelizavetovskaya barrows.

Excavations of Scythian barrows were intensified in the 1960s and '70s when construction of irrigation systems was started in the steppe to the north of the Black Sea. During this period about three hundred barrows were excavated by different archaeological expeditions of the Institute of History, Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR. One of these barrows, the Gaimanova Mogila, yielded a silver-gilt ritual vessel of the fourth century B.C. The vessel shows two groups of relaxing Scythians, whose servants are offering them a wineskin and a goose.

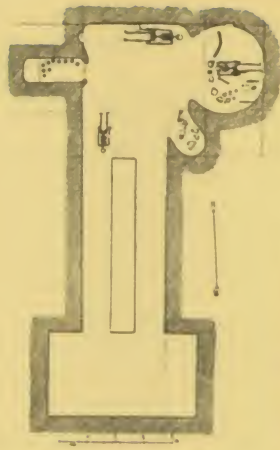
Excavations of the Tolstaya Mogila (Great Grave) barrow near the town of Ordzhonikidze, Dnepropetrovsk Region, in 1971 were of great importance, particularly because

Burial vault with a representation of Demetra on the ceiling in the Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow

Pl. 166

Demetra. Painting on the ceiling of the burial vault in the Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow





they yielded a large and unique gold pectoral (breast ornament) of superb workmanship. Made in relief, it depicts scenes from the nomadic life of the Scythians.

All these outstanding artifacts, found in the Scythian barrows of the Ukraine over the past thirty years, are now kept in the Museum of Ancient Ornaments in Kiev.

A thorough study of the relics of Scythian culture found in the Ukraine, the North Caucasus and Siberia, has provided evidence that all the artifacts dating from the sixth century B.C. are closely related. Archaeologists have gradually established the similarity of many cultural elements in the vast area extending from the Danube to Mongolia. Many identical articles of the Scythian type were found at sites separated by enormous distances. The majority of these objects are items of horse attire or harness, since the horse was at that time the chief means of long-distance travel. A similarity is also traceable in the bronze arrowheads, *akinaki* and other weapons, as well as in personal adornments, which were found in different areas. Cultural contacts may also be demonstrated by the frequent depiction of animals, usually shown engaged in fighting, in the so-called Scythian animal style.

The links between the nomadic tribes can be traced back to the pre-Scythian era, beginning from the eighth century B.C. They are illustrated by material from the archaeological excavations of the Arzhan barrow (Tuva ASSR). In addition to objects similar to those found in the Ukraine and Bulgaria, it also contained fragments of Persian fabric which were two centuries older than the earliest Persian carpet which had been found in the Pazyryk barrow in the Altai mountains. All these facts show that the conditions of that period allowed certain contacts between remote areas to be maintained. This was largely due to the nomadic forms of livestock-raising common to all the tribes, especially horse-breeding, which made it possible to move great distances. Regular interchanges between the nomads helped them to compensate for the deficiencies in minerals and metals, such as tin. Nevertheless, there were apparently no direct contacts between the tribes of the extreme East and West. Cultural elements were obviously adopted and passed on from one tribal group to the next, although the process might have been haphazard and the groups themselves unaware of the origins of this culture.

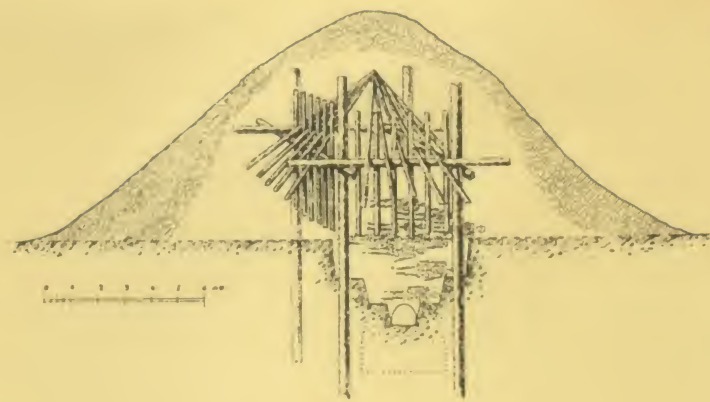
Plan of the lateral burial in the Solokha barrow

General view of the Solokha barrow

The Seven Brothers barrows in 1873

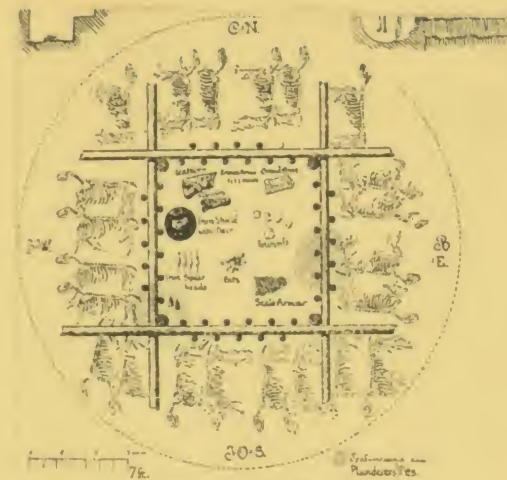
Plan of the burial in tumulus 2 of the Seven Brothers barrows





Burial structures in the mound of the Kostromskaya barrow

Plan of the burial in the Kostromskaya barrow



The well-armed and highly mobile Scythian horsemen – skilled archers and brave warriors – were a constant threat to their neighbours. Herodotus recorded that they, alongside the Cimmerians, invaded Asia Minor and conquered some areas of the region. Herodotus' view, however, that these nomads subsequently lost all contact with their native land is questionable. Herodotus' record of the Scythian invasion of Asia Minor has been recently confirmed by ancient documents and by archaeological evidence. The arrival of the Cimmerians was first recorded by Assyrian scouts about the mid-eighth century B.C., and the Scythians appeared in this area in the seventh century B.C., as recorded on clay tablets found in the archives of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. The Scythians participated in hostilities against Assyria – this fact was mentioned in the chronicles of the Babylonian king Nebopolassar for the years 616–609 B.C.

Excavation of Urartian citadels of the seventh century B.C. in Transcaucasia (Karmir-Blur) and in the central part of the former Urartian kingdom (Chavush-Tepe), near Lake Van (Patnos), has yielded many items of horse harness, iron weapons, beads, etc. In shape and style the objects are reminiscent of those found in the ancient barrows near the Dnieper river and in the North Caucasus. In the barrow to the north of Lake Van a large number of three-edged bronze arrowheads, apparently of the Scythian type, was found.

Further proof of the interaction between the Scythian and the ancient Oriental cultures was provided by analysis of the archaeological finds made at Zawiyeh in the north-west of Iran in 1947. One group out of a large body of artifacts was quite distinct from the others, in that its decoration combined elements of the ancient Oriental style (Urartian) with certain features typical of Scythian art. At the same time some objects recovered from distinctly Scythian barrows show an Oriental influence. These include *akinaki* with gold hilts and scabbards from Kelermes and from the Melgunov barrow, which was opened in 1763. The Scythian motifs (recumbent stags) combine on the objects found in Scythian barrows, as well as on the Zawiyeh finds, with Near Eastern elements (a sacred tree and fantastic animals) rendered occasionally in a distorted way.

Archaeologists often associate the origin of Scythian art with their invasion of Asia Minor. Undoubtedly, their stay there resulted in a strong impact of Near Eastern art on Scythian culture, but elements of the animal style have also been observed in artifacts of the earlier period found in Siberia and in the Volga area. As is now known, the steppes around the Ural mountains and along the Don and Volga rivers were inhabited by nomadic tribes with a culture akin to that of the Scythians. The Greeks called them Sauromatae or Sauromatians, and in all probability it was they who served as intermediaries between the Scythian world and the tribes of East Kazakhstan. The gold plaques from a wooden quiver, shaped as recumbent stags, which were found in Kazakhstan, in the Chilikta barrow of the early sixth century B.C., are a convincing evidence of the links.

The contacts spread further through the Kazakh steppes to the Altai mountains, as testified by the finds unearthed in the Pazyryk and Bashadar barrows. The unique material recovered from these barrows proved to be of the utmost scientific and artistic value, because the formation of permafrost had ensured excellent preservation of objects of wood, bone, felt, leather and metal. All these articles testify to the links of the Altaian culture with those of China, Persia and Scythia. The sixth-century B.C. objects from the Pazyryk barrows include the oldest specimen of Chinese silk fabric ever found, a large



Persian carpet and some fragments of Persian textiles, with designs copied from glazed tiles of the Achaemenid palace in Susa.

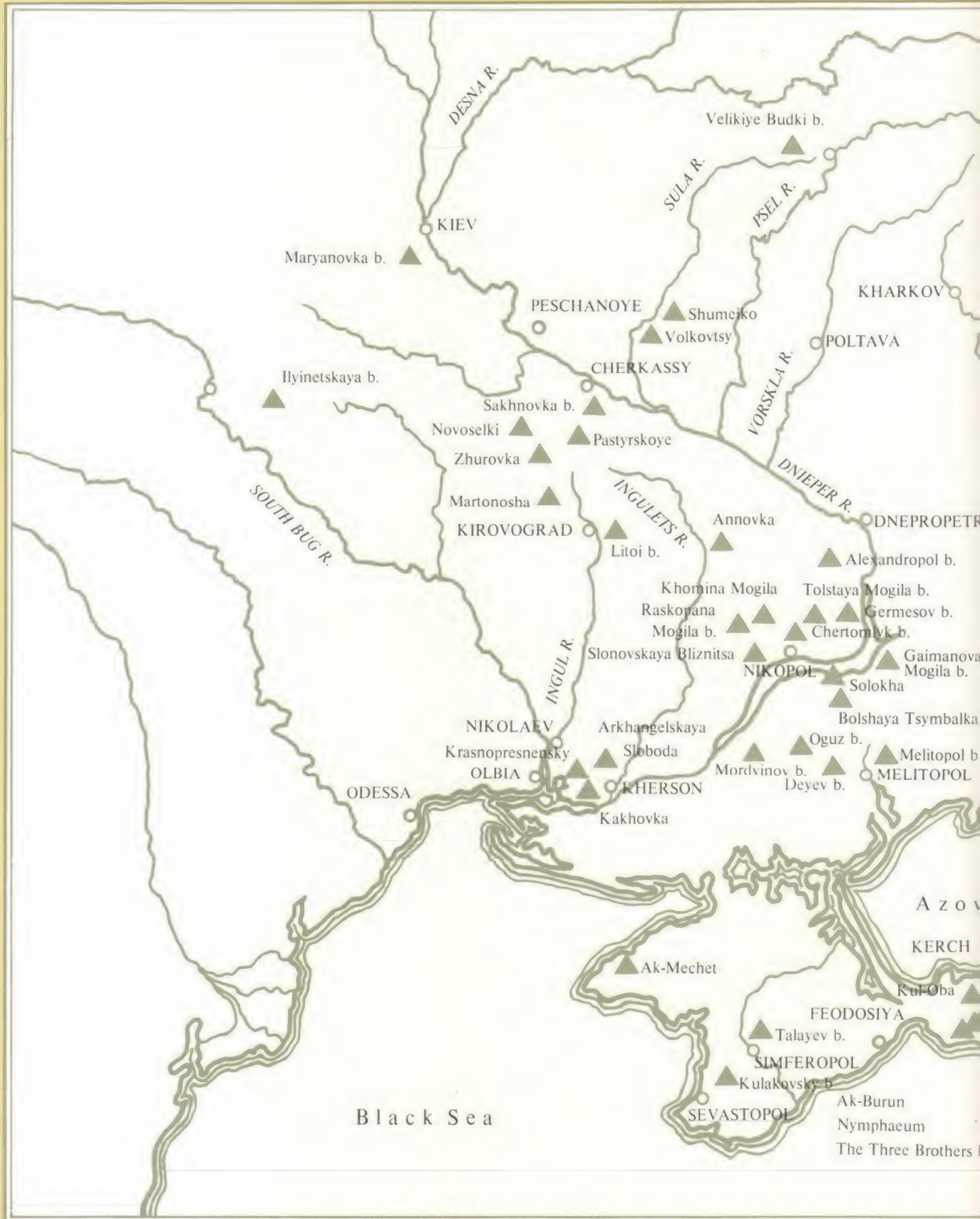
The famous collection of Scythian antiquities in the Hermitage consists mainly of artifacts unearthed from the barrows in the lower reaches of the Dnieper river and in the North Caucasus. It provides an opportunity for the viewer to see the whole range of intricate relations that existed between the Scythians and their western, eastern and southern neighbours. Thus, in 1970 a Thracian bridle set with fine silver plaques in the form of animals' heads was found in the Khomina Mogila barrow. A remarkable object of Persian origin (from the Achaemenid era) is a richly decorated gold hilt of a sword, found in the Chertomlyk barrow. Also of note are a silver rhyton (drinking vessel) in the shape of a winged ibex and gold overlays for a wooden vessel, discovered in tumulus 4 of the Seven Brothers barrows (so named because of their number).

We know of a dozen Achaemenid seals, which were found in the areas to the north of the Black Sea and in the North Caucasus. A burial in the Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow on the Taman peninsula yielded two works of Near Eastern art: a chalcedony signet-ring of the Achaemenid era depicting a king killing a lion and an earthenware amulet shaped as the head of the Egyptian god Bes (a dwarf with an ugly face and a head-dress of feathers or palm leaves). The image of Bes, who was regarded above all as a guardian spirit, might have reached the area from the south, since many Egyptian craftsmen had been forced to move to Persia in the Achaemenid time and they could make their amulets there.

Egyptian objects may also have reached the Scythian lands through Urartian centres and, starting in the sixth century B.C., through Greek colonies, especially those of the city of Miletus. A large number of Egyptian scarab amulets was manufactured in the Milesian colony of Naucratis in the delta of the Nile and then exported to Scythia (they were found on Berezan Island, in the ancient necropolis of Olbia, commanding the estuaries of the Bug and the Dnieper, and in the burials of Gornaya Racha on the southern slope of the Caucasus mountains).

Thus, numerous artifacts found in the Scythian lands provide evidence of the Scythians' vast contacts with different cultures of the peoples of Eastern Europe and the Near and the Far East. This extensive channel of cultural communication connecting East and West functioned successfully until the middle of the first millennium B.C., to be later transformed into the famous "silk route". The silk route existed until the sixteenth century A.D., running from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea via Persia and Central Asia to the banks of the Huanghe river in China. Later on the main trade route shifted southwards, as the sea came to be preferred for trade and communications. The strong links with the countries of Asia Minor were vital for the Scythians, who thereby gained access to a highly developed culture and art.

The magnificent Hermitage collection of Scythian antiquities, dating from the seventh to the third century B.C., contains many masterpieces of jewellery. It reveals the highest level of workmanship and the Scythians' close ties with many peoples and tribes in the vast territories between the Far East and Western Europe.





# Pages from Scythian History

Herodotus (484–425 B.C.), the Greek historian known as the Father of History, states in his detailed account of the origin and customs of the Scythian tribes that they called themselves “the most recent of all nations” and believed that they descended directly from their legendary forefather Targitaus, who was born in their land, then a wilderness, to divine parents – Zeus and the daughter of the Borysthene river (as the Dnieper was then called). The historian recorded that legend during his visit to the Greek colonies on the northern coast of the Pontus Euxinus (Black Sea), about 450 B.C. According to another story related by Herodotus the Scythians were descended from Heracles and a mythical creature, half-maid and half-serpent, who dwelt in a dense woodland called Hylaea, not far from the Borysthene. Both legends were apparently created by the Scythians to substantiate their claims to the area in the lower reaches of the Dnieper.

Herodotus himself shared the opinion of the Greek poet Aristeas, who thought that the Scythians had migrated to this area from their native lands somewhere in the eastern part of the Eurasian steppes. Although the real origin of the Scythians has still not been established, historians favour two main theories. One group thinks that the Scythians were Iranian-speaking tribes which migrated to the area from Asia and reached the northern parts of the Black Sea in the seventh century B.C. with their culture already formed. Another group of historians believes that these were autochthonous tribes of indigenous origin which had inhabited these areas for many centuries. This group believes that their material culture had been formed by the seventh century B.C. on the basis of the so-called log culture, which had been brought to the Black Sea from the Volga basin about the end of the second millennium B.C.

Since the appearance of these nomadic tribes on the stage of world history the name ‘Scythian’ became a symbol of the threat of destruction. Herodotus points out that the Scythian invasion of the area adjacent to the northern Pontic shores ended in the nearly complete extermination of the Cimmerians who lived in this area. The surviving Cimmerians left the steppes for Asia Minor. Shortly afterwards the Scythians also headed south in search of new lands. They crossed the Caucasus and invaded the territory of Asia Minor. Ancient records describe a great upheaval caused by the invasion of this mobile and well-armed force. The Assyrian chronicle dated these events from the 670s B.C. Oriental and classical records also report that the Scythians stayed in the territory of Asia Minor for nearly a century and actively participated in a number of military campaigns and local wars. According to Herodotus, they not only imposed heavy tributes upon the conquered nations, but often carried out plundering raids, devastating all around “by licentiousness and neglect”.

The prophet Jeremiah, addressing the Israelites, described in a dramatic manner the disasters that would be brought by the northern nomads: “It is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say. Their quiver is as an open sepulchre, they are all mighty men. And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat; they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees; they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword.”

The Scythians formed on the territory of Transcaucasia a kind of tribal alliance which was called the Scythian kingdom, with its centre in the country of Manna near Lake Urmia (now Lake Riziaiye in Iran).

For twenty years they dominated the area, taking an active part in the raids against Assyria, in the siege of its capital Nineveh and in the destruction of the state of Urartu. Even the pharaoh of Egypt had to pay large tributes to placate the Scythian rulers.

The rise of a powerful kingdom of the Medes in this area put an end to the rule of the Scythians. Driven away by the Median king Cyaxares (c. 600 B.C.), they abandoned the area and left Asia Minor for their native lands in the lower reaches of the Dnieper. On their way back some groups of Scythians settled in the North Caucasus, which had been their bridgehead during the military incursions into Asia Minor.

A major centre of the early Scythian culture was the area along the Kuban river in the North Caucasus. From time immemorial it had been inhabited by non-nomadic Maeotian tribes which were subjugated by the nomads moving from Asia Minor. The finds from the Kelermes barrow in that area, where a local aristocracy of Scythians was buried, fully confirms this assumption. The rest of the Scythians, judging by archaeological finds of the Litoi (Melgunov) type of barrows, returned to the steppes near the Dnieper.

The strong and militant nomadic tribes of Scythians soon subjugated a number of Thracian-speaking and pre-Slavonic tribes (Alazones, Budini, Geloni, agrarian Scythians), who occupied the area of the forest-steppes along the Dniester, Bug and Dnieper rivers. This tribal alliance was the first state organized on the territory of Eastern Europe. Within this state, the clan of the Scythian king established political and military domination.

From the seventh to the fifth century B.C., Greek colonies emerged on the northern and eastern shores of the Black Sea near the area inhabited by the Scythians. Particular importance was acquired by Olbia, Chersonesos and Panticapaeum.

The unusual way of life and strange customs and habits of the Scythians attracted the attention of many Greek historians, geographers and writers. Herodotus writes that the Scythians “have neither cities nor fortifications, but carry their houses with them”, that they “are all equestrian archers, living not from the cultivation of the earth, but from cattle”, and that their “dwellings are waggons”.

These nomads, with their huge herds and wheeled family-dwellings, endlessly roamed the vast steppes. Constantly in search of new pastures, they resorted to force to acquire new grazing-grounds. Their livestock pro-



vided them with all necessities of life. They drank mare's milk and ate cheese and the meat of the animals. They usually received grain for their bread from the subject land-tilling tribes as tribute, while wine, olive oil, adornments and some items of weaponry were bought from the Greeks or acquired in exchange for some other goods, including animal products, hides, honey, fish and especially wheat. The Black Sea coast also supplied people for sale as slaves, who were captured by the nomads during their plundering raids against neighbouring tribes. Ancient records often mention Scythian names among the slaves sold as potters and domestic servants, but most are listed as archers.

Describing the Scythian way of fighting the enemy, Herodotus states that "no one who attacks them can escape" and "if they do not choose to be found, no one is able to overtake them." The historian explains it as follows: "For they, who have neither cities nor fortifications but carry their houses with them, who are all equestrian archers... – how can such a people not be invincible, and difficult to engage with?" A fine example of Scythian invincibility was the utter defeat of the Persian kings Cyrus and Darius I in their military campaigns against the Scythians carried out in 529 and 512 B.C. respectively. The Scythians usually lured the enemy deep into the open steppe far from his sources of supply and then exhausted him by endless attacks from all sides.

In the early period of the Scythian kingdom its armies were formed by the conscription of all able-bodied men. Women also sometimes took part in military campaigns. The king himself headed the troops. Later, cavalry detachments of the Scythians were organized on a voluntary basis. The nucleus of each detachment was a heavily-armed corps of the nobles which formed the king's bodyguard. The steppe nomads were born warriors and never parted with their weapons.

"We are continuously engaged in battles, either attacking the enemy or defending our loot and pastures," said the Scythian Toxaris, a hero of the story of the same name by the Greek writer Lucian of Samosata (second century A.D.). It is not strange, therefore, that bravery and defiance of danger were virtues particularly revered by the Scythians. They specially cultivated these qualities by performing solemn military rituals and ceremonies. When a Scythian soldier killed his first enemy, Herodotus relates, the event was marked with a special ritual – the Scythian drank his blood. Skulls of enemies were used for making bowls covered with leather and sometimes with gold. Slain enemies were scalped. According to a tribal law, the share of the booty awarded by the chieftain to his warriors for bravery depended on the number of heads with which they returned.

Fraternal relations were quite natural for the Scythians. Unrelated men could affirm their friendship and mutual loyalty by making a solemn contract of blood brotherhood. According to Herodotus and Lucian, Scythians entering such a union had to cut their fingers with a knife, squeeze out several drops of blood into a sacred bowl filled with wine, plunge a sword, a spear, a pole-axe and some arrows into the bowl and make many solemn prayers. Finally all the participants drank the mixture and proclaimed themselves to be brothers. Depictions of the ritual, especially its crowning moment, are frequent in works of art from the Scythian era.

Lucian tells us that according to Scythian beliefs such a brotherhood could not exceed three persons because "a fraternity shared by many cannot be strong." He describes several Scythian legends about the heroism and faithfulness of those who tied their destinies to others' by the oath of blood brotherhood. "It was on the fourth day of the friendship of Dandamis and Amizokes, after they had drunk each other's blood," begins a legend. Suddenly the Sauromatians, nomads from across the Don, attacked the Scythian camp. They captured much loot and drove hundreds of people with them. Amizokes was among the prisoners too. When he was being taken away, he began to "call his friend loudly reminding him of the blood and the bowl." On hearing his voice, Dandamis immediately went to the enemy's camp and asked for the release of his friend. When the chief of the Sauromatians demanded a large ransom he answered: "You've looted all I had... If you want, take me instead of him and do with me whatever you like." The Sauromatian ordered his eyes to be put out. At this high price Dandamis regained freedom for his blood brother. Amizokes did not remain indebted. In solidarity with his friend, he blinded himself. After that they lived in honour, receiving food from the Scythian community.

Like most ancient peoples, the Scythians believed in magic and worshipped deities which embodied natural phenomena; they also held animals in veneration. Unlike the Greeks, the Scythians did not erect temples or statues for their deities; they constructed a special altar for offerings and sacrifices only to their god of war. For this purpose they built every year an enormous mound of dry faggots in the open, and on the top they placed an ancient iron sword, a symbol of the Scythian counterpart to the Greek god Ares. The religious rituals of the Scythians consisted mainly of such ceremonies as libations, offerings and sacrifices of horses and other domestic animals. In addition, one of every hundred captives was sacrificed to their god of war.

The funeral ceremonies of Scythian kings, who were believed to be descended from the gods, included human sacrifices. As soon as the news of the death of their king reached the Scythians, they started constructing a grave for him. The site of the Scythian royal cemetery, as indicated by Herodotus in his account, was in the land of the Gerrhi, who dwelled at the point where the Borysthenes (Dnieper) was first navigable, i.e. near the Dnieper rapids. The internal organs were removed and the cavity filled with a preparation of chopped galingale, frankincense, parsley-seed and anise-seed. After that the incision was sewn up and the body was coated with wax. It was then carried on a chariot through all the tribes. Finally it was brought to the country of the Gerrhi and laid upon a mattress in the prepared grave; spears were fixed in the ground on either side of the corpse, beams were

stretched across them, and the whole covered with a roof of twigs. Along with the king and his valuables, the Scythians buried his guards, domestic servants, cup-bearer, one of his concubines, and some of his horses, all killed in his honour. Then they set to work raising an earthwork above the grave, seeking to make the mound as high as possible.

Some Scythian burial mounds are indeed very large and reach a height of 18 to 20 m. Nevertheless, the site of the royal Scythian necropolis mentioned by Herodotus remains unknown. Some unearthed barrows of the fourth century B.C., like the Solokha, Chertomyk or Tolstaya Mogila tumuli, seem closest to kings' burials in terms of their splendour. They are located on the lower reaches of the Dnieper, which corresponds to the mysterious land of the Gerrhi indicated by Herodotus. But they are of a later date and differ in some details from the description given by the historian. The main difference is that they were not constructed as rectangular pits but are rather complicated underground tombs with deep entrance shafts and long passages leading to burial chambers of the catacomb type.

The royal power in the Scythian kingdom was patrimonial, and after the king's death the throne was traditionally taken by his heir. The king was first and foremost the supreme military commander. Together with the chieftains of the tribes he performed the main religious rites. A privileged group was also formed by magicians or soothsayers who divined with the help of sacred willow rods.

The Scythians revered the customs of their ancestors and remained faithful to their tribal deities. Adherence to alien religions brought severe punishment or even death to any violator, including members of the royal family. Greek colonists in the towns along the shores of the Black Sea knew the fate which had befallen many Scythians who had abandoned their tribal deities for the religion and customs of the Hellenes. Herodotus tells the story of the son of a Scythian king who was murdered by his own brother for veneration of the Greek gods and for close relations with the Hellenes.

In the sixth century B.C. Anacharsis, son of King Gnurus, travelled to Greece, where he became famous for his profound knowledge of philosophy and other sciences. His name is associated with the invention of the potter's wheel and the anchor. He is also supposed to have taught the Greeks to drink wine in the Scythian way, undiluted by water. The learned barbarian was known as one of the wisest men in the world. The ship on which he was travelling home was driven by a storm to the harbour of Cyzicus in Asia Minor. This was during the festival dedicated to the Great Mother of the Gods, and the superstitious Scythian made a vow to the goddess that if he returned safe to his country, he would sacrifice in the same manner as he had seen. Being a man of his word, he fulfilled the vow and began to perform the rites to the goddess. But in the course of the sacred ceremony he was surprised by his brother Saulius, who shot him with an arrow and killed him. Thus did Anacharsis die, concludes Herodotus, for his "aping of foreign customs and intercourse with the Hellenes".

Eventually the growth of contacts and trade between the Scythians and the Greek colonies brought a noticeable change in the Scythians' attitude towards the Hellenic civilization. Some Scythians even succeeded in gaining high repute among the Greeks for their abilities. In the sixth century B.C. the Scythian Toxaris, for example, settled in Athens. Although he was a man of modest means and had no titles of distinction, he became a very skilful healer and was posthumously deified by the citizens of Athens. But his real immortality rests on his colourful descriptions of the everyday life, customs and traditions of his native Scythia. Many famous Greek authors repeated his legends in their own works, but of these only a few tales in Lucian have come down to us.

Herodotus tells a second dramatic legend about the cruel punishment meted out to Scythians who betrayed their native beliefs and customs, but in this case the subject is a Scythian king, Skyles. Herodotus describes how Skyles came to prefer the Greek way of life to the Scythian. He lived in Olbia, where he built a house for himself and decorated it with marble statues, wore Greek clothes, spoke Greek and married a Greek woman, and, most important, worshipped Greek gods. Having met him among the Greek inhabitants of Olbia during the festival in honour of Bacchus, the god of wine and merry-making, after he had been initiated in the Bacchic mysteries, the Scythians killed him as a traitor. "Thus", Herodotus concludes, "the Scythians maintain their own customs, and impose such punishments on those who introduce foreign usages."

The extension of trade and cultural relations with the Greek colonies, however, considerably increased the Hellenic influence upon Scythian culture. By the end of the sixth century B.C. many elements of Greek culture had become part of the everyday life of the Scythian nobles. They used more and more articles of Hellenic origin along with the products of local Scythian craftsmen and revealed an interest in Greek mythology. In turn, Scythian life and artistic imagery became a source of inspiration for artisans in the Greek centres on the Pontic coast. Thus the Scythian world was the inspiration for masterpieces of Greek metalwork with realistic scenes of the nomads' life, which are an invaluable contribution to antique art and world art as a whole.

Late in the fifth century B.C. the Scythians built their first stronghold (known as Kamenskoye Gorodishche, on the lower reaches of the Dnieper), which grew into the administrative, manufacturing and trade centre of the Scythian kingdom. This large fortified settlement was inhabited by craftsmen, artisans and merchants who supplied the Scythians with necessary weapons, jewellery and articles of carved bone.

In the fourth century B.C. the Scythian kingdom reached the highest point of its power and wealth. The most outstanding personality among its rulers was king Atheas. During his reign the Scythian state expanded its

western borders to the banks of the Danube. In 339 Atheas, still trying to conquer new lands at the age of ninety, led his troops against the Thracians, who inhabited the territory on the right bank of the Danube. The Thracians were rescued by the Macedonian king Philip II, whose army repulsed the Scythians' attack. King Atheas was killed in the battle. Nevertheless, the Scythians soon recovered from this defeat and eight years later, in 331 B.C., summoned a force strong enough to defeat the 30,000-strong Macedonian army of Zopyrion, a general of Alexander the Great, who had laid siege to Olbia.

Endless war and internal strife gradually undermined the stability and power of the Scythian kingdom. The Sarmatian nomadic tribes, neighbours of the Scythians, took advantage of the weakening of the Scythian kingdom and crossed the Don river invading the Scythian territory. Eventually they completely ousted the Scythians from the area near the Dnieper. The Greek historian Diodorus Siculus (first century B.C.) described this event as follows: "The Sarmatians grew immensely strong and devastated most of the territory of Scythia, exterminating the population and turning the whole country into a desert."

The former owners of the northern coast of the Pontus Euxinus had to be satisfied with the steppes of the Crimean peninsula, where they found their last refuge. There they built their new capital, Neapolis, on the site of present-day Simferopol. Deprived of the tributes paid to them by the land-tilling tribes living along the Dnieper, the Scythians practically lost the main source of their wealth. In search of other sources of supply, they made an attempt to capture some Greek colonies in the Crimea and take control of the trade in the area. But they failed because military reinforcements sent by the Pontic king Mithridates VI (120–63 B.C.) defeated them in a series of battles. Although this crushing defeat did not result in the final collapse of the Scythian kingdom in the Crimea, it marked the beginning of the Scythians' disappearance from the historical scene.

The Scythians gradually settled down in the Crimean steppes and turned to agriculture. Eventually they merged with other peoples of this area and lost their tribal identity. The third century A.D. saw the end of the Scythian kingdom; life in their capital of Neapolis came to a halt.

After the Scythians had vanished from the stage of world history, the name 'Scythia' continued for many centuries to denote the territories north of the Black Sea in South Russia. The Scythians left to mankind a rich cultural legacy, which is a subject of ever-increasing interest.



# The Artistic Legacy of the Scythians

The lasting artistic value of Scythian antiquities is due to the great variety of superb works of decorative and applied art which belong to different trends and schools. The vast Soviet collections of antiquities done in the so-called Scythian animal style, unique in its refinement and expressiveness, are known throughout the world. Of special interest are the masterpieces of ancient relief metalwork with Scythian motifs and objects in the Graeco-Barbarian style manufactured in the Greek colonies on the shores of the Pontus Euxinus (Black Sea). Also noteworthy attention are the extremely rare works of art brought by the Scythians from Greece and Asia Minor, as well as some artifacts executed in the mixed Urartian-Scythian style or in the Oriental-Hellenic manner. The Scythian artistic treasures are not only the pride of the Soviet people, but have great significance for all mankind.

The distinctive features of the art and culture of the Scythians were determined by their nomadic way of life. Born warriors, horsemen and herdsman, they roamed the boundless steppes near the Black Sea coast with their numerous herds of cattle and horses all year round, their dwellings being covered waggons. It is quite natural that they had no interest in constructing public buildings or temples and did not erect images of their deities.

The only kind of monumental art were roughly carved tombstone figures, which the Scythians placed above their chieftains' graves. The sculptures presumably represented their legendary king and ancestor Targitaus, usually depicted as a mighty war-lord clad in Scythian armour, with sword or bow fixed to his belt. In his hand he usually held a sacred vessel as an attribute of the priestly authority of the Scythian kings.

The Scythians demonstrated particularly remarkable craftsmanship in the minor arts, producing fine bone carvings, bronzes cast by the *cire perdue* (lost wax) method and repoussé works in gold and silver.

The emergence of these decorative arts was connected with the class differentiation in Scythian society, a process which began in the seventh century B.C. The military leaders forming the upper stratum of the society tried by all possible means to distinguish themselves from their fellow tribesmen and to mark their importance and social superiority with the trappings of wealth and power. In the conditions of nomadic life and frequent military engagements these aims could be best achieved by gold and silver ornaments worn on ceremonial and ritual garments or by richly ornamented weapons and horse attire, toilet articles and ritual utensils. All these objects were decorated with figures of animals or scenes of fighting beasts, which were rendered in a distinctive vivid manner usually called 'the Scythian animal style'.

This art, designed to have practical significance, was by nature an applied art, but it had an extremely wide range of expressive symbolic imagery. The zoomorphic images of the Scythians reflected their outlook on the world and expressed the ethical and aesthetic ideals of nomadic warriors. Their ceaseless military campaigns, the constant readiness to repulse an attack and to defend themselves, led the Scythians to cultivate reverence for heroic deeds and valour. It was natural, therefore, that these qualities also embodied the Scythian concept of beauty. It is not merely coincidental that in their depiction of animals obvious preference is given to images of strong and aggressive beasts of prey or to extremely alert or swift-running animals capable of defending themselves.

The Scythian belief in the magic power of zoomorphic images also contributed to their choice of animals as subjects of their works of art. Every figure or image executed in the Scythian animal style was considered by the Scythians as a kind of *apotropaion*, an amulet capable of warding off disasters and troubles. The ornamentation of weapons and horse harness with images of strong, swift animals had a special significance because the Scythians believed that such qualities as strength, speed, a keen eye and an acute sense of smell could be transferred from the images to the warrior, his weapon and his horse. Each image apparently had its own concrete meaning, although it is not easy to identify it now. It is quite obvious that every zoomorphic image was associated with some kind of deity personifying cosmic powers and natural phenomena. It is known from Herodotus' account that the Scythians worshipped the gods of the hearth, fire, sky, earth, sun and war. Lack of detailed information about the Scythian deities, however, makes it impossible to link a particular image in the animal style to a definite deity of the Scythian religious pantheon with any degree of certainty.

In the mythology of the congeneric Indo-Iranian tribes, one animal could symbolize several different gods and, conversely, each deity was invested with the capacity of reincarnation as several animals. The sun, for instance, which struck people's imagination with its swift movement, was interpreted either as a soaring bird, as a stag with golden antlers or as a galloping horse. All these images were represented in the stock of motifs of the Scythian style.

Scythian art, like the whole of Scythian culture, may be divided into three periods: early Scythian or archaic (seventh and sixth centuries B.C.), middle Scythian (fifth and fourth centuries B.C.) and late Scythian (late fourth and early third centuries B.C.). Each period had its own peculiar features in style and subject matter. In the course of time specific motifs appeared or disappeared and the shapes underwent a number of changes.

Even in the archaic period the animal style seemed to be a natural blend of the unique Scythian artistic tradition and certain borrowed forms, mostly of ancient Oriental origin.

The range of imagery was based on the notions of the animal world and included both real animals and fantastic beasts, the latter often whimsically incorporating dissimilar parts taken from different beasts. Thus, figures of members of the cat family, images of stags, ibexes, elks and birds of prey were introduced to Scythian art. Certain parts of animals' bodies symbolizing their main qualities were also used as independent motifs. The most favoured subjects were heads of beasts, birds, rams, and horses, or simply a horse's hooves or an animal's ears.

*Pls. 1, 13* Two imaginary creatures, specific to the Scythians, were predominant in their art. One of these originated in Scythian mythology and resembled a flying ram with the beak of a bird of prey. The other one, the griffin – a winged lion, generally with an eagle's head – was created by the fantasy of Oriental peoples. The Scythian antiquities of the archaic period usually depict only the avian head of the monster with a beast's ears and a long projecting tongue. Naturally, the Scythians invested this borrowed Oriental motif with their own meaning. The dreadful appearance of the monster carried the idea of the indomitable power and unconquerable spirit that permeated the nomad's entire perception of the world.

*Pl. 15* The subjects of ancient Oriental origin which were borrowed by the Scythians included the already mentioned felines, most likely panthers, as well as ibexes – animals which are unknown in the area to the north of the Black Sea. The Scythians did not simply copy the borrowed subjects, but re-interpreted them according to their own stylistic precepts.

*Pls. 2, 8, 10–12, 17* The images of animals in Scythian art were subject to a canon of artistic representation. Predatory beasts were shown in upright position, with their muzzles bent to the ground as if they were tracking their prey or curled up so that their rear paws touched the muzzles. An ancient Oriental heraldic composition, two figures of rampant beasts facing each other, also occurred in Scythian art. Standard stylistic devices were used widely in the treatment of details; for instance, the ends of the paws and tails were denoted as a rule by circles and ovals.

*Pls. 16, 20* Stags and ibexes were depicted in a recumbent position with their legs drawn under their bodies, and ibexes, moreover, were shown with their heads turned back, which made them reminiscent of their ancient Oriental prototypes. The species of animals were designated by one or two distinctive features. The stag, for instance, can be easily identified by its stretched-forward head with many-tined antlers laid back along its spine. The ibex can be recognized by its slanted muzzle, large sickle-shaped horns and sometimes a little beard.

*Pl. 21* In interpreting birds of prey (most likely eagles), craftsmen generally restricted themselves to depicting their heads. Images of birds with outspread wings are rare.

*Pl. 19* In side views of birds' heads the Scythians usually emphasized large round eyes and hooked predatory beaks. One particularly interesting example is an eagle's head sculpted of bone: its eyes are surrounded by stylized miniature figures of hoofed animals. This figurine, one of the oldest specimens of the animal style, reveals a tendency of Scythian craftsmen to use zoomorphic ornamentation in their compositions. They did not, however, introduce additional animal motifs simply for decorative effect. This was apparently done to increase the magical powers of the image by transforming it into a symbolic creature endowed with the qualities of several animals. This stylistic and perceptual device vividly illustrates the originality of Scythian artistic interpretation.

*Pl. 3* The compositional arrangement in Scythian works of art was often determined by the form and shape of the material. The creators of the animal style always attempted to use enclosed, compact forms to fit their images into the available space. Thus, for example, the image of a curled-up beast of prey became a customary compositional scheme for ornamenting round surfaces. This motif occurs on a great variety of Scythian artifacts. An example may be seen in the decoration of the upper part of a bone eye-bar, part of a horse bridle of the early Scythian period (the four eyelets cut out at its sides served as guides for the reins).

*Pl. 7* The carved bone tips which were attached to wooden bits, snaffles and cylindrical bridle pieces are another noteworthy example of form determined by application. They were ingeniously transformed into miniature heads of rams, ram-birds and goats, whose short necks had eyelets for the reins and pins. The designs of ancient Scythian bridle bits and cheek-pieces were dictated by strict constructional logic. The tip of one of these is carved as a horse's head with its muzzle stretched forward and a long ear bent to the neck. The craftsman revealed a fine sense of plasticity fitting the head into the plaque's general structure which, according to convention, stands for the body of the animal. This device allowed him to create the image of a swiftly flying horse. The tip of another bit was sculptured in the form of an intricately stylized head of a ram, with a hoof and a horn sharply coiled around its eye. The motif of the hoof was also a magic symbol expected to quicken the gait of a horse.

*Pls. 1, 9* The amazing variety of different plastic and compositional designs is illustrated by a number of bronze pole-tops typical of Scythian art. They were intended for use in ritual ceremonies. The interior of the pole-top was filled with little balls and suspended bells, which produced a clanging sound believed by the Scythians to frighten away evil spirits.

*Pl. 60* Sometimes the pole-top was made in the form of the head of a horse or a mule with pointed ears as if on the alert. In other cases an openwork body containing a bell was crowned by the head of a fantastic bird with a ram's horn and a protruding, seemingly trembling tongue. Most of these clanging pole-tops were recovered from the graves of Scythian war-lords alongside remnants of sacrificed horses. This indicates that the pole-tops were linked with the cult of the horse.

*Pl. 14* In spite of all the rigorous convention of Scythian composition, their early representations of animals demonstrate a realistic style and a deep knowledge of nature. The ability of the ancient craftsmen to perceive the essence of each animal and to capture its specific features is worthy of admiration. The Scythian craftsmen did not actually copy nature, but created a typical pattern by hyperbolization and stylization. Thus, the combination of lifelike authenticity with a stylization and generalization of forms became a distinctive feature of early Scythian art.

One of the most exquisite works of the animal style, truly its classical standard, is the golden plaque found in the Kostromskaya barrow, which was evidently used as a shield emblem by a Scythian chieftain. This plaque, chased in high relief, shows a recumbent stag with its legs drawn up under its body. The precise outline and the generalization of form enhance the expressiveness and sense of movement of the image. The raised head of the stag, its antlers spread along its entire back, its outstretched neck, its sharply defined muscles – all this makes the sense of the animal's internal energy, power and instinctive alertness even greater. The difficult task of conveying this idea in a conventionalized and at the same time realistic manner has been successfully solved in a precise decorative form. The integrity of the composition and the intricately decorative pattern of scrolls on the antlers enhance this impression of harmony. The round eye and the leaf-shaped ear of the stag were originally decorated with inlays of coloured paste. Pl. 16

Among the artifacts of the early Scythian period the gold figure of a panther from the Kelermes barrow occupies a unique place. The artistic treatment of this figure accentuates the aggressive character of the beast. Its tremendous strength and constant readiness to attack are revealed in its alert pose and in the angle of the head with its threatening display of teeth. The most interesting thing about this work is that it is a fusion of the Scythian and Oriental styles. The craftsman must have been well versed in the art of Asia Minor. His adherence to the Oriental motifs is evident in his choice of the panther as his subject and in the use of coloured inlays for ornamenting the ear, eye and nostrils, as well as in the departure from the strict profile view of the figure – the beast is shown from another angle, with all its four paws visible. Nevertheless, these minor divergencies from the conventional rules of Scythian art do not alter the genuinely Scythian nature of the Kelermes panther. This is clearly demonstrated by the specific pose of the animal, by the use of light and shade and most of all by the zoomorphic stylization of the details. The tail and the lower parts of the beast's paws are covered with the minuscule figures of curled felines, ten in all. These images were apparently intended to increase the magic power of this amulet. Pl. 17

Of great value for the comprehension of the atmosphere in which Scythian art was formed are the priceless finds of the Melgunov (or Litoi) and Kelermes barrows. These rich sepulchres of the late seventh and early sixth centuries B.C. were constructed for the Scythian supreme rulers who participated in the military expeditions to Asia Minor. The superb artifacts found in these barrows are all the more striking because of the number of different stylistic manners they represent. It is most likely that during their temporary stay in Asia Minor the Scythian nobility quite eagerly engaged the services not only of their own craftsmen, but also of artisans from various West Asian and Oriental centres.

Illustrative in this respect is the above-mentioned burial mound of the Scythian chieftain who was the owner of the gold panther plaque. The presence of articles executed in the animal style alongside metalwork belonging to other traditions suggests the diversity of his artistic tastes. Three objects of the latter group are of particular interest. They include one of two nested bowls (one fitting into the other), a battle-axe and a sword. The hemispherical body of the inner bowl is ornamented with three rows of friezes with embossed designs. The upper frieze depicts a procession of striding birds which look like bustards, a favourite motif in Assyrian glyptics. The middle frieze also depicts a scene typical for the Ancient Orient: a wolf chasing a she-goat and a lion tearing a stag. The lower frieze shows a stag, a wild boar, and recumbent goats with their legs drawn under their bodies. The bottom of the bowl is decorated with an embossed rosette, which is a symbol of the life-giving sun. Pls. 24–27

Although the poses of the animals depicted in the lower frieze and the presence of a stag among them suggest the Scythian animal style, the technique of execution and principles of stylization are quite alien to Scythian art. The stiff, naturalistic treatment of the bodies and their intentionally accentuated ribs, meticulously marked hair and other minor details all reveal the hand of an ancient Oriental craftsman, an adherent of the Assyrian school of art. It seems that these libation bowls may have been commissioned from him by a high-ranking Scythian, simultaneously performing the duties of commander and priest.

The bladed head and wooden handle of the iron battle-axe are covered with gold overlays modelled in relief. They are dominated by images of various animals in different poses – bulls, wild boars, goats, stags, panthers, a horse with a bridle and a fantastic beast with its paws transformed, in truly Scythian fashion, into birds' heads. In spite of the presence of these and a number of other Scythian motifs the general scheme is overburdened with images, which is a characteristic of Oriental art. The compositional principles of ancient Oriental art are reflected in the symmetrical positioning of the goats (the only sculptured group of the decoration) on the back part of the head, in the goats at the sides of the sacred Tree of Life and, finally, in the figure of a man with a battle-axe. The images are clearly on the borderline between the Scythian and ancient Oriental artistic styles. The execution of the images is not so overtly naturalistic as in the treatment of the libation bowl and not so laconic as it customarily is in Scythian works. The muscles of the animals' haunches are shown by double contour lines while backbone, ears and hair are marked by hatching. Pls. 36–40

The difference between the Ancient Oriental and the Scythian artistic conceptions is visually demonstrated by the decorative finish of the sword and scabbard. It is covered with high-relief gold plaques done in an eclectic style. Heads of eagles stylized in a Scythian manner and a clearly Scythian stag are surrounded by mythological figures borrowed from the ancient Oriental pantheon. The images typical for Oriental art include winged deities standing by the Tree of Life and fantastic beasts some of which are shooting from bows. The frightful monsters Pls. 32–35

have lions' bodies, griffins', goats' or bulls' heads, and toothed fish in place of wings. One cannot help noticing an unnatural fusion of two styles in this work. The detailed ornamental depiction of the bodies of fantastic creatures contrasts sharply with the generalized and laconic treatment of the little figure of the recumbent stag. The overall character of the relief patterns clearly shows the predominance of the Ancient Oriental, or, to be more precise, Urartian style. While using his traditional technique, the Urartian craftsman did his utmost to meet the requirements and tastes of the Scythian customer. This accounts for the presence of the stag motif on the sheath, so popular with the Scythians and obviously copied from a Scythian prototype. Artifacts of ancient Oriental workmanship, similar to those found in the Kelermes burial, apparently were the main source from which the creators of the animal style derived certain compositional schemes and motifs.

*Pls. 41–44*

Yet another interesting group of toreutics from Asia Minor was recovered from the Kelermes and Melgunov barrows. It mainly consists of decorative elements for the legs, elbow-rests and seats of ceremonial stools of the Urartian-Assyrian kind. The three-dimensional decorative details of this furniture (heads of lions and goats, pomegranates, petals, etc.) are combined with elements decorated by means of granulation techniques or inlaid with enamel or amber.

*Pls. 45, 46*

The graves of Scythian chieftains in the Melgunov and Kelermes barrows also contained marvellous artifacts of the Graeco-Oriental style. One of the best specimens of this style is a gold diadem in the shape of a crown with drop-like pendants and encrusted rosettes, whose petals were originally inlaid with coloured enamels. The sculptured head of a griffin, its neck plumage rendered in gold filigree, interrupts the monotony of the row of rosettes and gives the diadem a particular ceremonial quality. Also belonging to this artistic current are a gold relief overlay for an unidentified object and a cast silver mirror. The figures on the overlay – two wading herons and a monkey with a human hand – are of exquisite gracefulness.

*Pls. 47–50, 53*

A fine specimen of metalwork is a round silver mirror with a fragment of a central ring handle. The reverse side of the silver disk is covered with electrum plates decorated with fine designs. The composition of the image is truly overburdened with ornamental and figurative motifs and is centred around a winged female figure, Cybele, the Great Goddess of Asia Minor and the queen of the animals. She is surrounded by fantastic sphinxes and griffins as well as by recumbent, running or fighting animals – lions, a fox, a bear and others.

The iconography of the images, the meticulous attention to detail (rendering of animal hair by subtle hatching) and other stylistic devices are quite typical for the Graeco-Oriental school of metalwork. At the same time two motifs, a standing panther with curled claws and a ram with its leg under the body, are typically Scythian artistic images. The mirror itself is also Scythian in design, although its decorator undoubtedly was a Greek craftsman. Complying with the request of his Scythian client, he embellished the mirror with electrum plates and did his utmost to meet Scythian tastes in their decoration.

The influence of Greek culture on the Scythian world was especially pronounced after the nomads' expeditions into Asia Minor. In the first half of the sixth century B.C. a number of Greek colonies appeared on the Kerch Strait and along the Black Sea coast, which were founded predominantly by migrants from the Ionian cities. From that time the impact of the mighty antique civilization became a steady factor in the history of Scythia. But the Greeks had known about these lands and the population of the northern shores of the Black Sea long before permanent Greek colonies were set up. Colonization was preceded by a long period of chance visits of Greeks who had undertaken the risky voyages from the Aegean Sea to the Pontus Euxinus. This was followed by a period of slowly developing trade relations between Greek maritime traders and the upper stratum of the barbarian society. The Greek merchants offered a number of goods which had been unknown to the Scythians: fine painted vases, richly chased metal vessels, beautiful textiles, graceful personal adornments, decorated weapons, as well as olive oil and grape-wine. They traded these goods for grain (Greece was always in need of grain), wool, hides and slaves.

*Pls. 3, 6*

*Pl. 56*

The trade contacts with the Greek merchants prior to the establishment of their colonies on the Black Sea coast are clearly illustrated by material from the excavation of the Temir-Gora barrow near the present-day town of Kerch. Alongside superb sculptured decorations in bone, such as the already mentioned head of a bird of prey and the coiled beast, both executed in the Scythian animal style, archaeologists discovered a painted terracotta vessel (oenochoe) of surpassing beauty. It belongs to the so-called Rhodian-Ionian pottery popular in Ionia in the seventh century B.C. The yellowish surface of the vessel looks as if it were covered with the mottled pattern of an Oriental rug. The neck of the vessel is decorated with an ornamental linear pattern of meander, and its body is adorned with friezes. The upper frieze shows a panther approaching a bull and the sides of the vessel are embellished with goats. The lower part of the vessel bears a lanceolate pattern, while the friezes are separated by bands of intertwining lines. The free space between the animals is also ornamented with rosettes, swastikas, diamonds and crosses. The decoration shows that the potter followed the traditional orientalizing scheme of the developed Graeco-Ionian style. But at the same time the images of the panther and the bull are obviously derived from the metalwork of ancient Persia. The animals are rendered with great care and confidence, and the depiction is remarkable for its plasticity and beauty.

Although the figures are rather conventional and generalized, they fully retain their lifelike charm and vivacity. The composition of the decor, its motifs and type of ornamentation as well as the specific style of its



brush painting in dark-brown varnish fully correspond to the character of decoration used in Rhodian-Ionian pottery in the third quarter of the seventh century B.C.

It is worth noting that this masterpiece of Greek art had fallen into the hands of a Scythian ruler prior to the appearance of Greek towns and colonies in the area of the Kerch Strait (Bosporus Cimmerius). After the colonies had been founded in the coastal area of the Black Sea in the sixth century, many wonderful overseas items made of metal or clay were exported to remote areas of Scythia by ship, via the rivers Dnieper, Bug, Don and Kuban and their navigable tributaries. The Greek merchants also made use of the land routes which ran from Olbia across the vast territory of Scythia to the East. It is likely that the unique masterpieces of antique toreutics which were found in the barrows of Martonoshy and Annovka in the Ukrainian SSR were brought to the Scythian territory from the Greek colony of Olbia. A magnificent Ionian bronze krater is of particular interest. Its volute handles are decorated with running figures of the Gorgon Medusa. The handles and decorations were cast in a mould forming the outside of a wax model, the standard method employed by Greek craftsmen. They could use the mould for only one item. The other barrow yielded a fine bronze mirror with a sculptured handle in the form of the nude goddess Aphrodite, whose raised hands support its disk. Pl. 55

Thus, imported luxury goods first found their way by sea from mainland and insular Greece directly to the Scythian nobility; later such goods were brought from the neighbouring centres of the Black Sea coast. Pl. 51

In the second half of the sixth century B.C. a large number of workshops catering to the tastes and demands of the barbarian aristocracy emerged in Olbia, Panticapaeum and other coastal Greek towns. Their products included, for example, cast bronze mirrors of Greek design, with long handles decorated with figures or heads of animals according to Scythian prototypes. Pl. 52

A cross-shaped bronze plaque, evidently part of a quiver, was manufactured in one of these Greek towns, despite its traditional Scythian motif. The Greek craftsman, however, was not as much interested in the depiction of an animal as in purely decorative effect. The abundant hatching used to depict the heads of birds and goats around the curled-up beast and the whole arrangement of the relief images produce a vivid ornamental impression. Pl. 18

During the late archaic period (turn of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C.) the tendency towards ornamental decorativeness in Scythian art itself gradually increased as well.

One of the most remarkable works of this period is a bronze pole-top found in the Ulsky barrow, which is cast in the form of a stylized head of a bird of prey. The imagery of this monumental piece is based on its well-balanced proportions and rhythmic dynamism, as well as on the wealth and plasticity of its forms, which are so carefully integrated with the overall design. The eagles' heads, varying in size, with circular eyes and spiral beaks, give the impression of a dense and elaborate pattern. This ornamentation is in sharp contrast to the realism found in the image of a recumbent goat and a small bird's head (faintly visible under the goat's chin), and especially in the enormous eye of a bird, which betrays an influence of Greek naturalism. This is undoubtedly an *apotropaion* intended to guard against evil spirits. For the Scythians, the bronze pole-top was clearly a powerful amulet supposed to ward off evil spirits by its frightening appearance and ringing bells. Pl. 58

MID-7th TO 6th  
CENTURY B.C.



1  
Eye-bars for linking bridle reins in the shape of rams and ram-bird's heads. Scythian, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Bone. Heights 2.7, 1.8, 2.8 cm. Kelermes barrow 1, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1904. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. Ky 1904 2/66. 71, 77



2

**Bridge plaque: two facing beasts of prey.** Scythian, early 6th century B.C. Bronze. 4.3 x 5 cm. Barrow near Tsukur-Liman, Taman peninsula. Chance find, 1913. The Hermitage. Inv. No. T. 1913.55

3

**Quiver ornament: sculptured head of a bird with images of an elk and two horses around its eye.** Scythian, mid-7th century B.C. Bone. 2.2 x 4.5 cm. Temir-Gora barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of A. Liutsenko, 1870. The Hermitage. Inv. No. T-F. 14

2



3

4



4, 5

**Eye-bars for linking bridle reins in the shape of stylized bird's heads.** Scythian, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Bronze and gold. 1.5 x 2.4 cm. Kelermes barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of D. Schulz, 1903-4. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1903-1904 1/16

6

**Eye-bar for linking bridle reins in the shape of a curled-up beast of prey.** Scythian, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Bone. 2.1 x 1.8 cm (oval). Kelermes barrow 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1904. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1904 2/178



6



7

7

**Quiver ornament: a curled-up beast of prey.** Scythian, mid-7th century B.C. Bone. 3 x 2.9 cm. Temir-Gora barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of A. Liutsenko, 1870. The Hermitage. Inv. No. T-Г. 13



8

**8**  
Object of unknown use decorated with relief figures of curled-up beasts. Scythian, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Gold. Height 6.8 cm. Kelermes barrow 1, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of D. Schulz, 1903. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1903 2/15



9

**9**  
Horse-bit terminals: head of a ram-bird, stylized animal ears and head of an ibex. Scythian, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Bone. Heights 3, 2.7, 2.5, 2.6 cm. Kelermes barrows 1 and 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1904. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. Ky 1904 2/73, 78, 187, 193



10



11



**10, 11, 12**

**Plaques: panthers.** Scythian, early 6th century B.C. Gold. 1.7 x 2.7 cm (each). Ulsky barrow 1, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1908. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1908 3/3



13

**Pole-top crowned by a fantastic figure combining features of a ram and a bird.**  
Scythian, late 6th and early 5th century B.C. Bronze. Height 17 cm. Barrow No. 476 near the village of Volkovtsy, Poltava Province (now Sumy Region). Excavations of N. Brandenburg, 1901. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Дн 1932 16/8

13



14

**Pole-top surmounted with sculptured head of a griffin with a ram's horn.**  
Scythian, early 6th century B.C. Bronze. Height 22 cm. Ulsky barrow 1, 1908, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1908. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1908 3/10

14



15

**Pole-top surmounted with sculptured head of a griffin.** Scythian, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Bronze. Height 35 cm. Kelermes barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of D. Schulz, 1903-4. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1903-1904 1/44

16

**Shield plaque: a stag.** A masterpiece of Scythian art, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Gold. 19 x 31 cm. Kostromskaya barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of N. Veselovskiy, 1897. The Hermitage. Inv. No. 2498/1

17

**Shield ornament: a panther.** The tail and paws ornamented with symbolic figures of curled-up beasts. A masterpiece of Scythian art, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Gold, amber and enamel. 16.2 x 32.6 cm. Kelermes barrow 1, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of D. Schulz, 1903. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1903 2/1



15

16

17

→









**Cruciform plaque, with bird's and ram's heads and a curled-up beast of prey.**  
Graeco-Scythian, 6th century B.C.  
Bronze. 11.2 x 10 cm. Necropolis at Olbia, Kherson Province (now Nikolaev Region). Excavations of B. Farmakovsky, 1910. The Hermitage. Inv. No. O 1910 55



19

**Plaque: a bird of prey.** Scythian, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Gold. 6 x 4.8 cm. Litoi barrow (Melgunov hoard) near Yelizavetgrad (now Kirovograd). Excavations of A. Melgunov, 1763. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Дн 1763 1/10

20

**Horse-bit terminal (?): a recumbent stag.** Scythian, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Gold. 1.8 x 3.1 cm. Kelermes barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of D. Schulz, 1903-4. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1903-1904 1/18



19

20

21

**Plaque: a recumbent ibex.** Scythian, late 6th century B.C. Gold. 3.2 x 3.9 cm. Ul'sky barrow 1, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1909. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1909 1/8

22

**Plaque: a griffin.** Scythian, 6th century B.C. Gold. 3.2 x 2.7 cm. Perepetovka barrow near the village of Maryanovka, Kiev Province (now Kiev Region). Excavations of N. Ivanishev, 1845. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. No. A3C-1638



21

22







23

**Overlay for a Scythian gorytus (case for bow and arrows) with relief figures of stags and panthers.** Scythian, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Gold. 40.5 x 22.2 cm. Kelermes barrow 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of D. Schulz, 1904. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1904 1/28

24

**Two nested libation bowls.** The outer bowl decorated with rhomboid and egg-shaped ornaments; the inner adorned with birds and animals. Asia Minor (Assyrian style), second half of the 7th century B.C. Gold. Height 9.7 cm, diameter 16.5 cm. Kelermes barrow 1, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of D. Schulz, 1903. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1903 2/37





25-27

Inner bowl: details



26

27

28

Horse bit decorated with a sculptured horse head. Scythian, 6th century B.C. Bone. Length 16 cm. Barrow No. 477 near the village of Velikiye Budki, Poltava Province (now Sumy Region). Excavations of N. Brandenburg, 1901. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДН 1932 17/7



29

Horse bit with sculptured head of a ram at one end and a hoof at the other. Scythian, 6th century B.C. Bone. Length 13.4 cm. Barrow No. 432 near the village of Zhurovka, Kiev Province (now Cherkassy Region). Excavations of A. Bobrinsky, 1904. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДН 1904 2/1

28

30

Horse bit with panther's heads at the ends. Scythian, 6th century B.C. Bone. Length 12.7 cm. The Dnieper area. Chance find, 1888. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДН 1888 1/1



30



31

**Cast helmet with eyelets for lining and cheek plaques.** Scythian, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Bronze. Height 20 cm. Kelermes barrow 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1904. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1904 2/149



32



32

**Iron sword in a gold scabbard decorated with ritual scenes, animals and fantastic beasts. Asia Minor (with Scythian elements), late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Gold and iron. Length of scabbard 47 cm, width 14.1 cm; length of hilt 15.5 cm. Kelermes barrow 1, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of D. Schulz, 1903. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1903 2/2**



33-35

Scabbard: details







36

Battle-axe: detail

37

Ceremonial battle-axe decorated with sculptured figures of goats and ritual scenes and animals in relief. Asia Minor (with Scythian elements), late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Gold and iron. Length 72 cm. Kelermes barrow 1, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of D. Schulz, 1903. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1903 2/3

36



37

38-40

Battle-axe: details





## 41

**Ornament for a stool leg.** Urartian, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Silver-gilt. Height 11 cm. Litoi barrow (Melgunov hoard) near Yelizavetgrad (now Kirovograd). Excavations of A. Melgunov, 1763. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Дн 1763 1/23





42

**Ornaments for a stool: lion's heads.** Asia Minor, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Gold. 4 x 4.3 cm (each). Kelermes barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of D. Schulz, 1903-4. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. Ky 1903-1904 1/11, 12

43

**Ornament for arm-rest of a throne: detail**

44

**Ornament for arm-rest of a throne decorated with sculptured heads of lions and rams, buds and amber inlays.** Asia Minor, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Gold and amber. Length 19.2 cm. Kelermes barrow 3, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Chance find, 1904. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1904 1/11





45

**Diadem with sculptured head of a griffin, rosettes and pendants.** Graecolonian style, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Gold, traces of enamel. Height 1.8 cm, diameter 21 cm. Keles barrow 3, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of D. Schulz, 1904. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1904 1/1

46

**Diadem: detail**

47

Reverse of a silver mirror; electrum plates with chased images of a winged goddess, animals and fantastic creatures. Graeco-Ionian style (with Scythian elements), late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Silver and electrum. Diameter 17 cm. Kelermes barrow 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of D. Schulz, 1904. The Hermitage. Inv. No. 1904 1/27



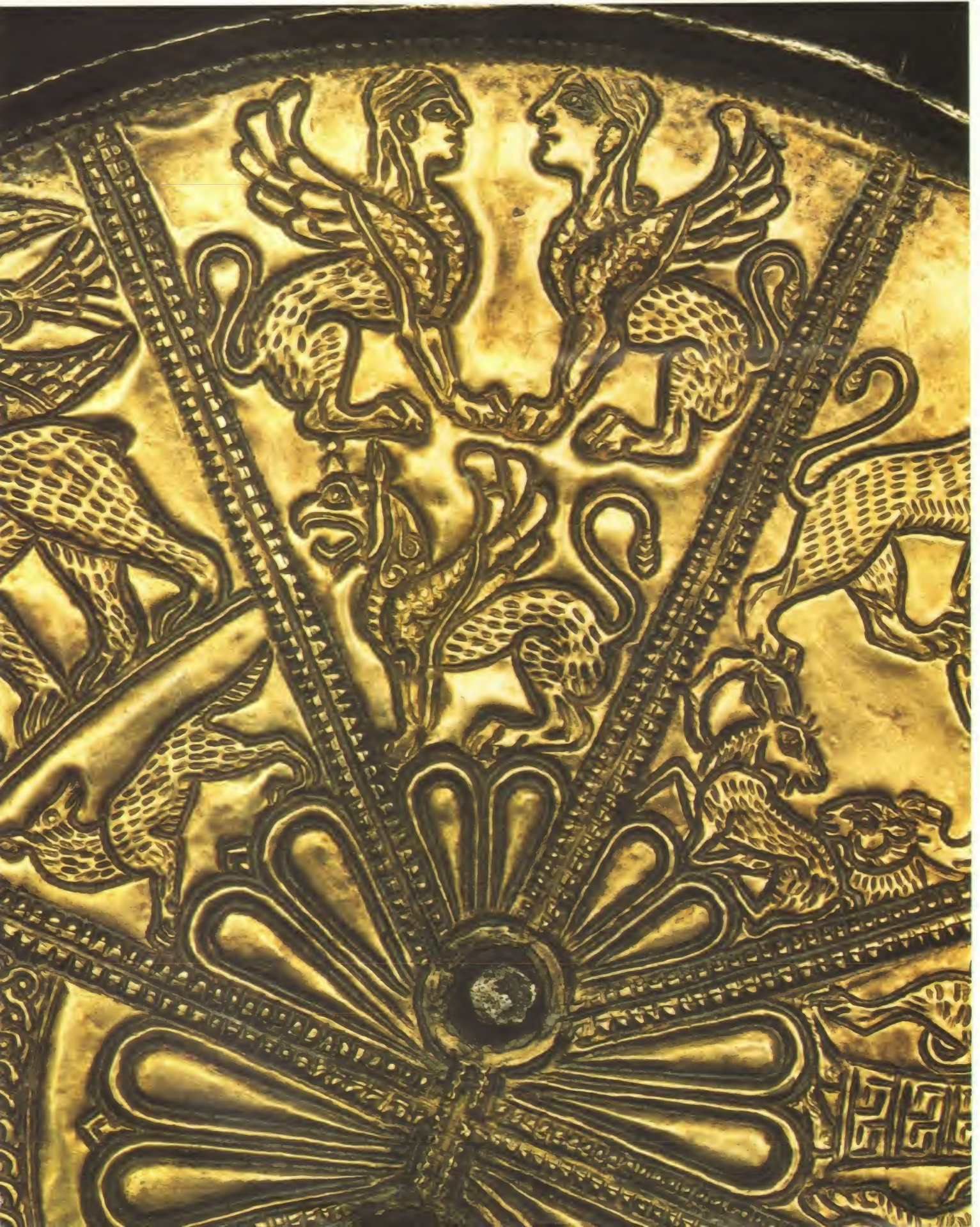
47

48

Mirror: detail



48









51

**Mirror with the handle (support) in the form of a nude female figure.** Aegina school, second half of the 6th century B.C. Bronze. Height 37 cm. Annovka barrow, Kherson Province (now Nikolaev Region). Chance find, 1897. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Дн 1897 4/1

51



**Cast mirror; the handle decorated with relief head of a ram and a stag.** Graeco-Scythian, 6th century B.C. Bronze. Height 35 cm. Necropolis at Olbia, Kherson Province (now Nikolaev Region). Excavations of B. Farnakovskiy, 1912. The Hermitage, Inv. No. O 1912 273



53

**Plaque with relief representations of a monkey and birds.** Graeco-Ionian, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Gold. 2.6 x 11 cm. Litoi barrow (Melgunov hoard) near Yelizavetgrad (now Kirovograd). Excavations of A. Melgunov, 1763. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДН 1763 1/21



53

54

**Cast cauldron with sculptured handles (one of them lost) in the form of an ibex.** Used for boiling meat of sacrificed animals. Scythian, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Bronze. Height 46 cm, diameter 51.2 cm. Kelermes barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of D. Schulz, 1903-4. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1903-1904 1/10

55

**Volute-shaped handle of a crater decorated with the Gorgon Medusa and snakes.** A rare specimen of Greek plastic art from the archaic period, about 540 B.C. Bronze. 19.3 x 16 cm. Martonosha barrow, Kherson Province (now Kirovograd Region). Chance find, 1870. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДН 1870 1/1



Oenochoe decorated with two friezes of running and grazing animals. Greek, second half of the 7th century B.C. Baked clay. Height 26 cm, diameter 28 cm. Temir-Gora barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of A. Liutsenko, 1870. The Hermitage. Inv. No. T-F. 12





57

**Pole-top: a bull's head.** Scythian, late 6th or early 5th century B.C. Bronze. Height 24.2 cm. Ulsky barrow 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1909. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1909 1/108

58

**Pole-top: stylized head of a bird of prey with relief representations of bird's heads and a recumbent goat.** With suspended ringing bells. Scythian, late 6th or early 5th century B.C. Bronze. 26 x 18.9 cm. Ulsky barrow 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1909. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1909 1/111

59

**Pole-top surmounted by sculptured figure of a stag.** Scythian, late 7th century B.C. Bronze. Height 24.2 cm. Makhoshevsky barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Chance find, 1895. The Hermitage. Inv. No. 2496-2

60

**Pole-tops: sculptured heads of mules.** Scythian, late 7th or early 6th century B.C. Bronze. Height 17.1 cm (each). Kelesmes barrow 1, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1904. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. Ky 1904 2/29, 30







The fifth century B.C. (middle Scythian period) saw substantial changes in Scythian art. These were reflected both in the choice of animal motifs and in the manner of their execution. The emergence of new forms occurred under the steadily increasing impact of Greek art and the simultaneously declining influence of West Asian and particularly Assyrian-Urartian art. In the course of time, the deep-rooted tendency of Scythian applied art towards ornamentation and decorative stylization gained new impetus. It is largely owing to this that scholars have named this epoch the age of Scythian baroque.

In their subject matter, forms and manner of execution, all the works of the Scythian animal style executed in the first half of the fifth century B.C. are, as a rule, still very close to earlier specimens. Nevertheless, they clearly reveal certain new features which will later develop into the fundamental traits of the middle period.

Thus, for instance, bronze bridle ornaments from the barrows near the village of Zhurovka, whatever their shape – stags' heads, recumbent elks or feline beasts – all have clear-cut, laconic forms without meticulous rendering of anatomical detail. Although certain parts of the body are conveyed as large relief planes, the specific features of each animal are always accentuated: the frightening teeth and the enormous claws of a beast of prey, the big, alert ears and tossed-back head of a hoofed animal. The same features can be observed in the heads of a bird and a recumbent stag on the gold overlays of wooden vessel from the Ak-Mechet barrow. Nevertheless, the same artifacts display a pronounced tendency of Scythian art towards decorative stylization of images – a tendency that was obviously inspired by Greek art. The result was a fusion of various zoomorphic images with floral patterns. The most common ornamental motif, constantly reinterpreted with astounding inventiveness, was the head of a bird, with a large round eye and a volute-shaped beak. Quite remarkable in this connection is the treatment of the stag's antlers on the gold plaque mentioned above. The antlers are in fact a fantastically arranged bunch of tiny birds' heads and petals of the antique palmette gathered around the animal's ear.

*Pls. 62, 64, 65, 71*

*Pls. 99, 101*

During this period such subjects as horses, ibexes, rams and ram-birds disappeared or became rare. But at the same time the Scythian artistic repertory was enriched by new motifs, both local and borrowed. The images of lions, wolves, wild boars and hares began to appear on gold and bronze wares, alongside fantastic creatures such as griffins with eagle's or lion's heads. The enrichment of the repertory was also connected with the introduction of so-called 'zoomorphic transformations'. While in the archaic period this device had been used with discretion, in the new period heads, hooves, legs and claws became independent and artistically finished motifs. In the course of time, these zoomorphic images gained the dominant position among Scythian themes, which testifies to their growing significance as amulets and magic charms. This unnatural emphasis on certain parts of the animal body also contributed to the tendency towards ornamentation and stylization. More and more often additional symbolic elements were introduced into the structure of the main image. These elements were representation of other animals or certain parts of their bodies. They were placed as a rule on the shoulders and hips as well as on the feet, horns and tail of the beast.

All these specific features can be well demonstrated by a bronze openwork plaque in the shape of a wolf, which was found in the Kulakovsky barrow in the Crimea. The image of this beast was brought to Scythian art from the Sauromatian world. Although iconographically alien to Scythian art, the motif was modified in this case to fit Scythian standards. The craftsman used the most logical compositional scheme for the decoration of a round-shaped object – a beast of prey coiled up in a circle, which perfectly fitted the shape of the object. In accordance with the representational principle of the time, the animal's proportions are somewhat distorted – the neck and other parts of its body are elongated. At the same time the deliberate enlargement of the eye and the ear is reminiscent of archaic images. The figure is covered with a large number of additional zoomorphic elements including, on the wolf's shoulder, a goat in its customary pose with the head turned backwards. The other symbols – a head of an elk and a number of the stylized eagle's heads – are placed on the shoulder, hip, tail and paws of the beast. The birds' beaks, rhythmically arranged in groups on each paw, seem to merge with the wolf's claws, enhancing their symbolic importance. Although this image may lack the vigour of the stag from the Kostromskaya barrow or of the panther from the Kelermes barrow, it nevertheless demonstrates the organic blend of realistic features and ornamental designs characteristic of the Scythian animal style of that period. The craftsmen, forced to adjust their skill to the predetermined shapes of their wares, became accustomed to enclosed arrangements of figures and to their generalized depiction, which led to a certain amount of distortion for artistic effect.

*Pl. 61*

*Pls. 16, 17*

From the mid-fifth century B.C. onwards, the influence of classical Hellenic art on the Scythian animal style substantially increased owing to the more extensive use of Greek wares by the Scythian nobility, especially those who lived in the vicinity of the Bosporan cities. If earlier only rare samples of Greek workmanship had reached Scythia, they now became widely used by the local nobility in its daily life. This is confirmed by the excavations of the famous Seven Brothers barrows on the Taman peninsula, which yielded many articles of that type. Similar objects were also found in the Scythian barrows of the ancient necropolis of Nymphaeum near Kerch. They include richly decorated weapons, torques and bronze adornments of Scythian horse harness as well as various objects, some of high artistic value, imported to the Bosporan centres from Greece, Etruria, Asia Minor and other areas.

Thus, for example, the Seven Brothers barrows yielded a whole series of remarkable vessels made of precious metals. Among them were silver and gold rhytons with finials in the form of sculptured half-figures or

*Pls. 110, 111*

heads of animals, which had been obviously imported from Achaemenid Persia, and very rare silver-gilt Attic bowls, kylikes, notable for their decor and execution. The interiors of the kylikes are decorated with exquisite engravings based on Greek mythological or literary subjects. In style they are very close to contemporary red-figure vases which were produced by the famous Athenian miniaturists. Another interesting artifact is a silver kylix of the third quarter of the fifth century B.C., with a multifigured composition in the central part of a medallion. It probably depicts a scene from the story of Odysseus and Penelope.

*Pl. 117*

Even more imported artifacts of the high classical period were discovered in the Nymphaeum barrows in the Crimea. Alongside a number of the finest black-lacquered and red-figure vases, the barrows yielded wonderful bronze artifacts from the Greek centres in Italy (Magna Graecia).

*Pls. 112, 113*

A red-figure vessel, a skyphos, depicting a standing woman clad in a tunic and mantle, with a thyrsus in her hand, and a woman holding a bowl on the other side, was undoubtedly painted by a skilful Athenian craftsman about the middle of the fifth century B.C.

*Pl. 109*

Etruria is the source of a superlative bronze wine-sieve of the first quarter of the fifth century B.C. The high-relief figure of a Siren standing in the halo of her raised wings is its main adornment. The sieve is marvellously decorated with an exquisite pattern of engraved volutes and palmettes.

*Pls. 104, 105*

A bronze oenochoe, which is noteworthy for its rare decoration, was produced in one of workshops of Magna Graecia (Southern Italy). The upper part of the handle portrays the bearded figure of Silenus, lying with his head on an amphora. The lower part of the handle depicts a seated boy framed by an intricate floral ornament of inlaid silver.

*Pl. 114*

One of the workshops of Magna Graecia, most likely in the town of Locri, a renowned metal-working centre, produced the marvellous figurine of an athlete designed to crown a bronze candelabrum made in the form of tripod. The depiction of triumphant athletes, winners in sport competitions, was a leading theme in Greek art of the fifth century B.C. The numerous surviving figurines of athletes are probably small-size reproductions of the statues which were placed in the temples of the athletes' native towns or in sanctuaries on the sites of competitions. Among artifacts of this kind, the miniature from Nymphaeum is an outstanding specimen of the so-called 'austere style'; it imitates a statue by the great Greek sculptor Polykleitos.

A well-preserved Panathenaic amphora was found in the grave of a Maeotian chieftain in the Yelizavetinskaya barrow. Vessels of this type served as awards to the winners of sporting events held in Athens once every four years in honour of Pallas Athena, patroness of the city. One side of the black-figure amphora shows the majestic figure of Athena and the other depicts the conclusion of a boxing match.

All these artifacts testify to the great wealth of the Sindo-Maeotian and Scythian chieftains and to their extensive trade and cultural contacts with the Greek centres in the coastal areas of the Black Sea in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. It is perhaps surprising that the barbarian chieftains had developed the discriminating taste required to appreciate the fine Greek works which are so common among their imports. But it helps to explain the steadily growing influence of classical art on the local tradition and, in particular, on the development of the Scythian animal style.

Owing to the introduction of a more realistic, sometimes even naturalistic treatment of details, a new stylistic trend emerged in Scythian art. At the same time, the techniques of decorative stylization were being enriched by elements borrowed from classical art and by the fashion for zoomorphic transformations, often carried to extremes.

*Pls. 63, 68, 69  
90, 91, 93-98*

A set of bronze bridle adornments recovered from the same Nymphaeum and Seven Brothers barrows demonstrate these trends. They are characterized by an original treatment of traditional Scythian subjects and by the unusual character of their plastic forms. They include a number of plaques in the form of heads of lions, griffins and wild boars, full-size figures of beasts, elks and stags, as well as images of fantastic creatures synthesized from the features of a griffin and a ram (the ram-bird) or a griffin and a stag (the bird-stag), etc.

The generalized representations of animals' heads continue to retain the realistic features typical of early Scythian art. However, it is precisely these representations that reveal, for the first time, conventional ornamentation in the rendering of detail, indicating a desire to give the image a certain integrity.

*Pl. 63*

Thus, the bronze bridle plaques in the form of lions' heads found in the Nymphaeum barrows differ from earlier ornaments from the Zhurovka barrow in that the lions have manes. Although treated schematically, almost conventionally, by oblique lines on a low raised field, it adds an important realistic touch to the image, which allows one to distinguish the lion from other feline beasts.

*Pl. 94*

In some cases animal eyes and ears are modelled in a more natural way. Protruding rounded eyes are replaced by almond-shaped ones with clearly outlined pupils; at times they are elongated by means of oblique incised lines, as was done on relief plaques in the form of wild boars' heads. The wing-shaped ears are often covered by deep incisions imitating animal hair. Such naturalistic treatment is noticeable on the chamfron (head-piece of a horse's armour) ornaments found in the Seven Brothers barrows, done in the form of stags' heads.

*Pl. 69*

*Pl. 95*

A bronze head of bird, taken from the Seven Brothers barrows, is one of the finest masterpieces in this naturalistic style. This chased plaque is done in a manner that is at once realistically generalized and decorative, in a combination determined by its functional use. The highly defined arrangement of the zoomorphic elements and

the ornamental pattern of antique palmette lend the bird and the whole image an exceptional expressiveness and finished look. This perception is not even disturbed by the substitution of a ram's horn for the bird's beak, because of which the image has been called the griffin-ram.

A similarly fantastic fusion of different animal motifs is seen in a bronze chamfron in the shape of a bird-stag. The menacing head of a griffin with a large protruding eye is placed on a powerful stag's neck, which in turn rests on a rectangular plate imitating a wing. The head is crowned by antlers branching upwards in stylized floral ornaments.

*Pl. 68*

A final example of the combination of different images on a bridle plaque is the delicately modelled head of a stag. Its antlers are composed of three small eagles' heads and the petals of a palmette. The variety of zoomorphic elements interwoven with palmettes, volutes and rosettes in bridle sets is infinite. Nevertheless, the compositional scheme of the image is always determined by a single artistic consideration – its decorative effect.

All these features are equally characteristic of the full figures of animals, among which hoofed animals and beasts of prey remained popular. Some bronze ornaments of bridles from the Seven Brothers barrows are quite unique in their design, although they depict traditional subjects. They seem to represent a local variation typical of the lower reaches of the Kuban river.

Stags and elks are generally shown with their legs folded under their bodies, their heads turned backwards and their antlers branching in a fan-like shape. Unlike the archaic examples, the side-view depiction of animals occupies two planes – the head is shown against the body, and both pairs of legs are in full view. Pursuing purely decorative aims, craftsmen in each case designed a composition in such a way that it united the softly modelled individual parts of the body with the ornamentation. In all this one can see the impact of classical Greek art. There are only slight visual deviations from the total symmetry. The centre of the composition is always a round eye, harmoniously fitted into the base of a palmette which is formed by the animal's antlers. The stag's antlers are always especially sumptuous, whereas the elk's are treated more laconically. In both cases, however, the inner points of the antlers are stylized as birds' heads.

*Pls. 90, 93, 98*

Ingenious devices are also used for the depiction of other beasts, particularly the lion and the panther. Bronze bridle bits might take the form of springing beasts. Shaping the ornament to fit its function (it passed through an iron ring), the artisan made the middle part of the body disproportionately large, and gave its hind part a twist. This made the figure expressive and dynamic and gave it the proper appearance of agility. All this is in full accord with the realistic rendering of some of the details and of the subject as a whole.

*Pls. 86, 88, 89*

The fifth century B.C. saw the introduction into the Scythian animal style, evidently again through the Greeks, of a new theme, that of fighting animals, which had originated in the art of the Ancient Orient. The gold overlays of rhytons unearthed from the Seven Brothers barrows show vibrant scenes of beasts and fantastic winged creatures attacking peacefully grazing animals. Stylistically, these images are still very close to late archaic examples because they have the same clear-cut forms of relief, the modelling of bodies in two planes and the rigid manner of depicting the wings. At the same time the treatment of the poses, foreshortenings and details is quite realistic. The plastic modelling and the choice of themes reveal an amazing combination of Greek and Oriental elements adapted to local Scythian traditions. The gold overlays which show a winged lion tearing a goat or the image of Senmurv, a fantastic creature in the form of dog-bird, suggest Persian influence, while the additional ornamentation is in the Greek manner. The stag's antlers are also stylized as an antique palmette with long offshoots. At the same time the wing of Senmurv is replaced by a bird's head in accordance with the rules of zoomorphic transformations adopted by Scythian art. The originality of the local artist is revealed in the free spatial disposition of the scenes on the surface of the plate, which retains considerable blank space.

*Pls. 106, 107, 108*

Gold appliqué work sewn on formal garments and on funeral shrouds enjoyed great popularity with barbarian nobility. Thousands of such articles survive, displaying a distinct evolution in subject matter and style. The earliest specimens, found in the Nymphaeum and Seven Brothers barrows, are distinguished by their fine chasing, sharp outlines and variety of forms and subjects. Besides the traditional animal motifs widely represented in bronzework, one can see here a number of subjects new to the Scythians in the fifth century B.C., again derived from Greek mythology. These include the head of Athena and her constant companions, an owl and the Gorgon Medusa, images related to the cult of offerings, such as the cockerel and the bull's head (*bucranium*), and fantastic creatures – the sphinx, Silenus and many others.

*Pls. 74–77,*

*79, 80–83, 85*

Thus the Scythian animal style became much more complicated owing to the wide penetration of Greek motifs, artistic devices and even whole subjects. At the same time it was also enriched by the realistic treatment of details and various floral elements of ornamentation.

5th AND 4th  
CENTURIES B.C.



61

**Bridle plaque: a coiled-up wolf with additional stylized images of a recumbent goat, an elk's head and bird's heads on its body.** Scythian, early 5th century B.C. Bronze, 9.7 x 10.5 cm. Kulakovsky barrow, Tauride Province (now Crimean Region). Excavations of Y. Kulakovsky, 1895. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Kp 1895 10/2

61



**62**  
**Bridle plaque: an elk resting on a bird's foot.** Scythian, 5th century B.C. Bronze. 10.1 x 4.5 cm. Zhurovka barrow "Г", Kiev Province (now Cherkassy Region). Chance find, 1903. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Дн 1903 11/7

**63**

**Bridle plaque: a lion's head.** Scythian, 5th century B.C. Bronze. 6 x 7.5 cm. Necropolis at Nymphaeum, barrow 32 (now Crimean Region). Excavations of A. Liutsenko, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ГК/Н-55

**64**

**Bridle buckle: two stylized elk's heads.** Scythian, 5th century B.C. Bronze. 5.7 x 7.5 cm. Zhurovka barrow "В", Kiev Province (now Cherkassy Region). Excavations of A. Bobrinsky, 1903. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Дн 1903 10/1





65

65

**Bridle plaque: a beast of prey lying on a horse-shoe.** Scythian, 5th century B.C.  
Bronze. Height 8.2 cm. Zhurovka barrow "Г", Kiev Province (now Cherkassy Region). Chance find, 1903.  
The Hermitage. Inv. No. Дн 1903 11/1



66

Iron sword in a gold scabbard decorated with relief figures of ibex and panthers. The tip of the scabbard ornamented with granulated triangles. Scythian, late 6th or early 5th century B.C. Gold and iron. Overall length 51 cm, scabbard width 8 cm. Shumeiko barrow, Poltava Province (now Sumy Region). Excavations of S. Mazaraki, 1899. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. No. ДМ-1711

66

67

Scabbard: detail

67





68

**68**  
**Bridle frontlet: a fantastic bird-stag.** Scythian, mid-5th century B.C.  
 Height 4.8 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр IV 40

**69**  
**Bridle frontlets: stags' heads.** Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Bronze.  
 Height 6 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1875. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр II 56

**70**  
**Fragment of a quiver overlay with a scene of a lion, a serpent and an eagle tearing a stag.** Graeco-Scythian, 5th century B.C. Gold. Height 10.1 cm. Ilyichovo barrow, Crimean Region. Excavations of A. Leskov, 1964. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. No. A3C-2288





71

**Chamfron with relief images of a recumbent stag, a bird and bird's heads.** Scythian, 5th century B.C. Gold. Height 24.5 cm. Barrow No. 401 near the village of Zhurovka, Kiev Province (now Cherkassy Region). Excavations of A. Bobrinsky, 1903. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДН 1903 4/1

72, 73

**Plaques: recumbent ibexes.** Scythian, about the 5th century B.C. Gold. 1.7 x 3 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1875. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр II 11



72



73



74, 75

**Plaques: cocks.** Graeco-Scythian, about mid-5th century B.C. Gold. 2.4 x 2.4 cm (each). Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1875. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр II 22

74 75

76, 77

**Plaques: sphinxes.** Graeco-Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Gold. 2.6 x 2.2 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1875. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр II 19

76 77



78

**Plaque: a hoofed animal (donkey or antelope) with legs drawn under its body.** Scythian, late 6th or early 5th century B.C. Gold. 3 x 4.5 cm. Shumeiko barrow, Poltava Province (now Sumy Region). Excavations of S. Mazaraki, 1899. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. No. ДМ-1716

79

**Plaque: Silenus head.** Scythian, about mid-5th century B.C. Gold. 3.4 x 3 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1875. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр II 5

78 79

80

**Plaque: a ram's head.** Graeco-Scythian, about mid-5th century B.C. Gold. 3.2 x 2.8 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1875. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр II 1

81

**Plaque: a bull's head.** Graeco-Scythian. About mid-5th century B.C. Gold. 3 x 2.8 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1875. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр II 9

80 81



82

**Plaque: a winged lion with its tail ending in a bird's head.** Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Gold. 3.2 x 4.1 cm. Necropolis at Nymphaeum, barrow 17 (now Crimean Region). Excavations of A. Liutsenko, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ГК/Н-34

83

**Plaque: an owl (subject of Greek origin).** Scythian, about mid-5th century B.C. Gold. 3.4 x 2 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1875. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр II 2



82 83

84

**Plaque with forepart of a wild boar and wing-shaped palmette.** Graeco-Scythian, about mid-5th century B.C. Gold. 3.8 x 4.6 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1875. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр II 3

85

**Plaque with a helmeted head on one side and a lion's mask on the other.** Graeco-Scythian, about mid-5th century B.C. Gold. 3.4 x 3.4 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1875. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр II 6

84 85





86

**Horse bit: a beast of prey with twisted hind part.** Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Bronze. Length 8.8 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр IV 60



87

87

**Bridle plaque: a coiled-up lion.** Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Bronze. Diameter 4.6 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр IV 59

88, 89

**Horse bits: a lion with twisted hind part.** Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Bronze. Length 9.5 cm (each). Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр IV 54



88



89



90

**Bridle plaque: a recumbent stag with its head turned backwards and antlers spread apart.** Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Bronze. 4.7 x 4.7 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр IV 38

91

**Bridle plaque: head of a bird of prey.** Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Bronze. 3.1 x 4.1 cm. Necropolis at Nymphaeum, barrow 24 (now Crimean Region). Excavations of A. Liutsenko, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ГК/Н-34



90 91

92

**Bridle plaque: a coiled-up lion.** Scythian, second half of the 5th century B.C. Bronze. Diameter 6.1 cm. Ak-Burun barrow 5, near Kerch (now Crimean Region). The Hermitage. Inv. No. АК-В 6

93

**Bridle plaque: a recumbent elk with its head turned backwards and antlers spread apart.** Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Bronze. 6.6 x 6 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр IV 49

92 93





94

**Bridle plaque: a wild boar's head.** Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Bronze. 2.7 x 7 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр IV 39

95

**Bridle plaque: head of a bird of prey and palmette.** Scythian, about 5th century B.C. Bronze. 5.8 x 9 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр II 55

96

**Horse bit: head of a bird of prey.** Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Bronze. Length 9.1 cm. Necropolis at Nymphaeum, barrow 24 (now Crimean Region). Excavations of A. Liutsenko, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ГК/Н-106



96



97

**Bridle plaque: a stag's head with its antler formed of three curved beaks set apart and with palmette petals.** Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Bronze. 5.7 x 3.5 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр IV 56

94  
95

98

**Bridle plaque: a recumbent elk with its head turned backwards and its antlers set symmetrically apart.** Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Bronze. 6.6 x 5.8 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр IV 51



97



98





99

**Overlay for the handle of a wooden vessel; head of a bird of prey.** Scythian, first half of the 5th century B.C. Gold. 3.7 x 6.7 cm. Ak-Mechet barrow, Tauride Province (now Crimean Region). Chance find, 1885. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Kp 1885 1/4

100

**Overlay for a wooden rhyton with relief image of an eagle tearing a hare and ornamental designs (egg-and-dart ornament and palmette).** Graeco-Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Gold. 10.3 x 8.3 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр IV 6

101

**Overlay of a wooden vessel decorated with a recumbent stag; its antlers ornamented by stylized heads of birds and palmette.** Scythian, first half of the 5th century B.C. Gold. 7.1 x 5.6 cm. Ak-Mechet barrow, Tauride Province (now Crimean Region). Chance find, 1885. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Kp 1885 1/1







103

102, 103

**Amphora with handles bearing lion's masks below and volutes at the top.** Graeco-Ionian, late 6th century B.C. Bronze. Height 51 cm. Peschanoye barrow, Cherkassy Region. Chance find, 1960-61. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. No. Б-41-738

104

**Oenochoe with Silenus and a seated boy on its handle.** Etruscan, second quarter of the 5th century B.C. Bronze. Height 24 cm, diameter 15.5 cm. Necropolis at Nymphacum, barrow 24 (now Crimean Region). Excavations of A. Liutsenko, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ГК/Н-70

104





## 106

**Overlay for a wooden rhyton with a winged lion tearing a goat and ornamental motifs (ovals and palmettes).** Graeco-Scythian, about mid-5th century B.C. Gold. 11 x 9.4 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 2, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1875. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр II 35

## 107

**Overlay for a wooden rhyton with relief image of Senmurv.** Graeco-Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Gold. 8.3 x 8 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр IV 8

## 108

**Overlay for a wooden rhyton with a lion tearing a stag.** Graeco-Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Gold. 12.6 x 10 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр IV 7





109

**Sieve with Siren in relief (detail).**

Etruscan, first quarter of the 5th century B.C. Bronze. Length 26 cm. Necropolis at Nymphaeum, barrow 24 (now Crimean Region). Excavations of A. Liutsenko, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ГК/Н-94

110

**Rhyton with a ram's head terminal.**

Graeco-Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Gold. Length 23.5 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр IV 2

111

**Rhyton decorated with pinnate ornament on its upper part and with a sculptured dog terminal.**

Graeco-Scythian, mid-5th century B.C. Gold. Length 27 cm. Seven Brothers barrows, tumulus 4, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр IV 1









112, 113

**Red-figure skyphos with standing female figures.** Attica, mid-5th century B.C. Baked clay. Height 19 cm. Necropolis at Nymphaeum, barrow 24 (now Crimean Region). Excavations of A. Liutsenko, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ΓΚ/Η-98



114

Upper part of candelabrum in the shape of an athlete. Etruscan, second quarter of the 5th century B.C. Bronze. Height of figure 10.2 cm. Necropolis at Nymphaeum, barrow 24 (now Crimean Region). Excavations of A. Liutsenko, 1876. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ГК/Н-91

114

115, 116

Boat-shaped ear-rings with filigree ornament and triangles of granulated surface and rosette terminals. Greek, 5th century B.C. Gold. Length 4.2 cm (each). Volkovtsy barrow 4, Poltava Province (now Sumy Region). Excavations of S. Mazaraki, 1899. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. Nos. A3C-1808, 1809



115



116



117

**Kylix with a scene from a Greek tragedy.**  
Attica, third quarter of the 5th century  
B.C. Silver-gilt. Diameter 13 cm. Seven  
Brothers barrows, tumulus 6, the Kuban  
area (now Krasnodar Territory).  
Excavations of V. Tiesenhausen, 1878.  
The Hermitage. Inv. No. СБр VI 11

117



Even greater alterations in Scythian art took place in the years that followed. In the fourth century B.C. the Scythian kingdom reached its zenith, and its contacts with the Greek colonies along the northern coastal area of the Black Sea greatly intensified. The centre of Scythian art then shifted to the Bosporan kingdom and especially to its capital Panticapaeum, where numerous workshops manufactured articles for the barbarian nobility. As the importation of Bosporan works of art attained mass scale, the Graeco-Scythian style, which had been remarkable in the previous epoch, acquired a completely new tinge. Bridles, armour, ritual paraphernalia and other articles formerly ornamented in the animal style now began to be decorated with anthropomorphic images of Scythian gods, mythical heroes, and religious and epic scenes. Multifigure, frieze-shaped compositions also gained popular acceptance. Adornments for the formal robes worn by men and women of distinction during solemn rites or burial ceremonies became common. All these representations in the animal style served primarily a decorative purpose; their symbolic importance was substantially reduced.

The royal barrows and the sepulchres of the Hellenized upper classes of the Scythians have yielded a great number of artifacts dating from this golden age of Scythian art. Among these countless objects one can see items of different origin: articles of Scythian workmanship are found side by side with purely Hellenic works as well as with objects made by Greek craftsmen in accordance with Scythian tradition. These artifacts of the mixed Graeco-Barbarian style are usually exceptionally ingenious. Executed in the classical forms of Greek realism, they were fully in accordance with the tastes and demands of the Scythian nobility. Many objects of gold and silver used on festive occasions are of this category.

The gold shield plaque in the shape of a recumbent stag, found in the Kul-Oba barrow, is a fine specimen of fourth-century Greek craftsmanship. It shows the influence of Scythian archaic works of the type exemplified by the Kostromskaya stag. While trying to imitate the scheme of the ancient original, which was a kind of eternal symbol of the Scythians, the craftsman treated it in a completely new stylistic manner. The main image is characterized by an emphasis on ornamentation, and somewhat dry, regular geometric shapes. At the same time the additional zoomorphic symbols are executed not in the conventional Scythian technique, but in the realistic Greek manner. Neither does their distribution on the stag's body correspond to Scythian criteria (usually the animals were placed on the shoulder of the main image and the birds on its tail). The images of a griffin, a hare, a lion and a dog, which undoubtedly represent particular concepts, are not directly linked with the central figure.

Pl. 213

Traditional motifs and compositional schemes typical of Scythian animal art did not experience any considerable changes in this period as compared to the prior one. And yet some new images of animals, birds and insects emerged in Scythian art – the dog, sheep, duck, swan, cockerel, grasshopper and fly; images of bulls, hares and especially of lions become more widespread than before. The artistic inventory was augmented by formerly unknown subjects taken from Greek mythology: Pegasus (the winged horse), hippocampus (the sea horse or dragon), satyrs and maenads (priestesses of Dionysus).

Pls. 135, 204, 207

Animal motifs were now found on numerous purely ornamental plaques used as appliqués to formal dress, mantles and curtains as well as on narrow plaques for ritual men's and women's head-dress, diadems and *calathi* (head-gear of Greek priestesses), link bracelets and other items. Executed in low relief by using the simplest technique of embossing or stamping, they are distinguished as a rule by their realistic rendering of forms, perfect plasticity and soft modelling. Some of the plaques from the Kul-Oba barrow, for example, are of a high artistic standard, for Greek craftsmen fashioned small objects as meticulously as works on a monumental scale.

Greek toreutic art of the fourth century B.C. displays a great variety of multifigure compositions with different or repeated scenes of preying animals. Two shallow gold libation bowls, phialae from the Kul-Oba and Solokha barrows, are outstanding specimens of this kind of work. Their external surfaces are entirely covered with rich relief patterns. The Kul-Oba bowl bears rhythmically arranged bands of chased friezes with twelve panthers' heads, twelve heads of the Gorgon Medusa, twenty-four masks of bearded Sileni, forty-eight figures of wild boars and ninety-six bees. A narrow ornamental band around the basin is decorated with images of dolphins and fishes. The bowl from the Solokha barrow, the work of a Greek craftsman, depicts fighting animals – lions charging at stags and horses. All the subjects which constitute the rich decoration are beautifully fitted to the bowl's shape. At the same time the interrelations between the individual images and the friezes are based on mathematically precise and artistically motivated calculations.

Pls. 164, 165

Pls. 162, 163

Similar gold and silver bowls were widely used by many ancient peoples, including the Greeks, for the ritual drinking of wine. A gold bowl of this type is mentioned by Herodotus in one of his legends. Along with other sacred implements, it fell, as legend has it, from the sky and became a symbol of royal power of the first Scythian king. The presence of such bowls in sepulchres points to the high social status of the persons buried. The symbols of high office also include torques, usually decorated with sculptured figures of animals facing each other at opposite ends. These typically barbarian adornments for men and women of royal or noble descent were produced both by local Scythian and by Greek craftsmen. Torques of local origin are characterized by smooth surfaces and terminals in the form of recumbent or sleeping lions (the Kul-Oba and Chertomlyk barrows), or groups of six crouching lions on each side (the Chertomlyk and Tolstaya Mogila barrows). The torques of Greek manufacture are smooth or twisted, most often terminating in caps inlaid with coloured enamels, and the head of a lion showing frightful teeth (the Solokha, Kul-Oba, Talayev barrows). Stylistic differences between these two groups are

Pls. 125, 235, 239

Pl. 122–124, 236, 237

also very substantial: full-length figures are executed in a generalized manner without special attention to detail, while the lions' heads, on the contrary, reflect the realistic tendency of classical Greek art.

The two artistic tendencies mentioned above can be seen quite clearly in the decoration of ritual vessels and rhytons, which form an integral part of the funerary inventory of royal persons. The most representative series of such artifacts, unearthed from the Kul-Oba barrow, includes three silver drinking-cups of a specific local shape: spherical, round-bottomed, with a tall cylindrical spout. The surface of each cup is decorated with a wide frieze depicting animals engaged in fierce fighting.

*Pls. 190–192*

In spite of their common subjects, the three vessels are rendered by different plastic means. In one of them, prominence is given to the scene in which three animals – a lion, a lioness and a stag – are engaged in mortal combat. The composition occupies almost the entire frieze, leaving only a small space for the image of a panther. The relief is not high and the individual parts of the bodies are treated in a rigid decorative manner. The paws are covered by volute-shaped lines which in a way resemble birds' heads with curved beaks, whereas the ribs are depicted by parallel incised arcs. These ingenious stylistic devices were obviously derived from Oriental art.

*Pls. 193–195*

The Greek craftsman who created the second vessel gave the same artistic problem a completely different solution. The frieze on this vessel, identical in size, includes three more closely spaced scenes of fighting animals: a lion and a lioness pouncing on a stag, two griffins swooping down on a goat, and a lion bringing down a wild boar. Together, these independent scenes form a harmonious unity tied by a common artistic idiom. The free expressive forms and movements are in full accord with the subtle realism in the rendering of detail. The intricate relief modelling is used to emphasize the extreme tension of the animals' bodies, their strained muscles and vibrant nerves. The figures are full of dynamism and the scenes themselves are full of emotional power. And yet there is neither a hint of pure decorativeness nor any symbolic overtone. On the contrary, the lively features are enhanced by naturalistic details: the birds' wing feathers, the lion's mane, the stag's hair and the wild boar's bristles.

*Pls. 188, 189*

The silver vessel with ducks is decorated in the same style. These graceful, lifelike birds are busy catching fish: one of them is just alighting on the water, the second is smoothly gliding on its surface, the third is taking wing, the fourth is diving for fish and so on. All these realistic scenes are rendered in the scrupulous manner so typical for Greek craftsmen. This is confirmed by the carefully considered poses, exact foreshortenings, precision in the depiction of the eyes, paws and feathers as well as by the mastery of chasing.

This class of artifacts includes a great number of objects from Scythian royal barrows such as link bracelets, diadems and ornamented plaques.

In the golden age of the Scythian kingdom, the upper classes did not restrict themselves to works of the animal style or to Graeco-Barbarian art. Hellenized to a substantial degree, the Scythian aristocracy was increasingly attracted to Greek culture itself. The best workshops of the Greek mainland sent sumptuous bronze vessels with gilt high-relief overlays to the steppes via the Bosporan towns.

Greek jewellery enjoyed great popularity, especially among women of distinction. Ceremonial attire and lavish head-gear were decorated with elegant ornaments. Some of these necklaces, ear-rings, bracelets and signet-rings are masterpieces of the classical epoch.

*Pls. 130, 133*

Thus, the exquisite ear ornaments found in the Kul-Oba barrow are outstanding specimens of that ingenious method of ancient Greek jewellery-making generally known as microtechnique, for which the craftsmen of Athens were especially famous. Each piece consists of a richly decorated disk, a crescent-shaped pendant and many small bud-like drops attached to the crescent by interlaced chains. The fine, elaborate details are so tiny that they cannot be seen with the naked eye. The disk is also covered with a microscopic filigree design of garlands, volutes and acanthus leaves interwoven with flowers which are done in the granulation technique and inlaid with blue and green enamels. What is most surprising is the skill with which the craftsman accomplished the task of setting four figurines of Nereids (sea nymphs) between the tiny petals of the double rosette in the centre of the disk. According to legend, the Nereids brought Achilles his helmet, sword and other pieces of arms and armour. Three tiers of lotus buds with engraved and finely granulated surfaces are fixed to the crescent-shaped pendant, which is itself ornamented with a delicate filigree design. The connecting points of the chains are hidden from view by filigree rosettes inlaid with blue enamels.

Two temple ornaments from the Kul-Oba and Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrows, part of a woman's head-dress, are stylistically very similar to the above-mentioned ear ornaments. Each has a disk-shaped medallion and a suspended openwork pendant, which forms a net of interlaced gold chains. Rosettes and buds hide the points of connection, and the medallions themselves are decorated with relief scenes derived from mythology. In the Kul-Oba specimen the medallion is adorned with a head of Athena in a rich helmet which bears images of galloping winged horses and, seated in the centre, a sphinx. The temple ornaments from the Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow depict Thetis, mother of Achilles, riding a hippocampus, with her son's armour in her hands.

*Pl. 134*

*Pl. 251*

The pendants from the Kul-Oba barrow, apart from their artistic value, are of great historical importance, for they are the earliest reproduction in full detail of the famous statue of Athene Parthenos created by the great sculptor Phidias for the Parthenon in Athens. Pausanias, a Greek historian of the second century A.D., has left us a description of the statue. The helmet from the pendants, along with the goddess's other attributes, fully corresponds to his descriptions.

A necklace from the Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow is a fine example of the inventiveness of jewellers in that period. It is a flexible and at the same time rather solid braid woven of thin gold strands, with filigree clasps at the ends made in the shape of lions' heads. Three rows of buds of different sizes are suspended from the braid on interlaced chains. Double rosettes and ringlets decorated with filigree and granulation are soldered over the connecting points of the chains. Pl. 230

Smooth and twisted gold bracelets were usually decorated in the same way as torques. Caps on the ends of the bracelets are usually richly ornamented with filigree patterns, inlaid with enamels and decorated with sculptured figurines of animals or fantastic creatures.

The massive bracelets from the Kul-Oba barrow terminate with half-length figures of sphinxes with folded wings. The figures, facing each other, have a stern and resolute look. All the details of their hair and the plumage of their wings are carefully engraved. Their heads are crowned with diadems, the necks are decorated with necklaces and suspended pendants and the ears are adorned with ear-rings. Thus, these artifacts reproduce in some way the appearance of a woman of that epoch. Pl. 182

No less imposing are the bracelets from the Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow with sculptured figures of lionesses in rampant position. These bracelets are a successful blend of the realistically treated images with ornamental patterns of the caps. Pl. 234

A specific group of jewellery is represented by gold signet-rings with engraved images. Their small bezels, engraved with extraordinary skill, depict miniature compositions on many diverse subjects and themes. Pl. 246

Such wonderful artifacts marked by the creative stamp of Ancient Greece could not fail to gain popularity among the upper strata of Scythian society, which possessed great wealth and wished to surround themselves with luxury.

The long-lasting contacts of the Scythians with the Bosphoran Greeks brought about one more phenomenon in art, the famous metalwork of northern Pontic Greeks, articles which depict the Scythians, their life, clothing, weapons and horse harness. The subject matter of these works reflects the daily life of the Scythians, their battles, rituals and customs, and events from their heroic epics.

One of the most famous specimens of this group is the electrum ritual vessel from the Kul-Oba barrow. On its sides, in high relief, four scenes of Scythian life unfold: bow stringing, chatting, bandaging a wounded leg, and extracting a tooth (or treating a mouth ailment). The Scythians' appearance, dress and weapons are reproduced in these scenes with amazing realism and ethnographic precision. By the skilful use of plastic modelling, the craftsman has managed to convey their moods and emotions – concentration, pensiveness and pain. Pls. 184–187

Each scene is compositionally complete, but they are evidently only parts of a single theme which can be interpreted as a picture of a Scythian camp after battle or as an illustration of the Herodotus legend about Heracles (identified by the Scythians with Targitau) and his sons. The sons competed for the right to succeed him, attempting to string his bow. Two of the brothers were not up to the task – one injured his leg and the other his mouth – but the third one succeeded and became the king of Scythia. Evidently the same legend was treated by the craftsman who decorated a silver vessel found in the Chastiye Barrows near Voronezh. Pls. 171–173

Another outstanding ritual vessel, a silver bowl, was found in the Gaimanova Mogila barrow. It is decorated with a wide frieze which contains six figures of Scythians in relief. The core of the composition is two scenes, each depicting a pair of Scythians. Two more single figures, evidently of secondary importance, are arranged under the horizontal handles of the bowl. Unlike the above-mentioned vessel, this one clearly portrays members of the royal family. Those portrayed are bearded warriors in opulent attire, in majestic and dignified poses, and invested with the visible attributes of their power – each has a torque on his breast and a mace, a whip or a libation bowl in his hands. Ceremonial weapons and armour complete their military appearance. The figures are in high relief and gilt; only the faces and hands are left in silver. This ingenious device intensifies the decorative effect in a manner obviously intended by the Greek craftsman. The elaborate treatment of details demonstrates his deep knowledge of Scythian life. Most probably this bowl also depicts a scene from the Scythian heroic epos. Pls. 166–170

One of the most beautiful specimens of Greek metalwork is the silver-gilt amphora from the Chertomlyk barrow. This is a large wine-vessel whose neck and three spouts are equipped with sieves to filter the wine. The vessel is flawless, both in its exquisite shape and its rich decorative finish. The exceptional subtlety of the chased work is clearly displayed by the decoration of the vessel's body. It is made up of floral patterns – palmettes, offshoots of plants, bluebell and lotus flowers, spiny leaves of acanthus and rosettes – and was apparently inspired by the finest red-figure vases of Attica and supplemented by birds with wings raised high. The side faucets are made in the shape of heads of lions and the central one has the form of a hippocampus' head surrounded by a radiant collar resembling fish fins. The upper part of the frieze on the shoulder of the vessel represents the traditional Scythian subject – a griffin attacking a deer. The middle frieze depicts a group of Scythians taming horses and its central part shows four men sacrificing a mare to a Scythian deity. Three of them are pulling their lassos and the fourth, half-naked, is ready to strike as soon as the horse is thrown down. The craftsman has displayed outstanding talent in showing all the figures in complicated foreshortenings and in conveying their various emotional states. The composition of the scene is full of vigour and movement. All the scenes of the frieze as well as the other parts of the decor are closely interrelated and subordinated to a single idea, which incorporates mytho- Pls. 265–268

logical conceptions and religious beliefs of the Scythians. The vase itself is chased in high relief, but most of the figures and sculptured faucets are moulded, then soldered to the body of the vase and gilt.

*Pls. 118–121* In 1971 the collection of Scythian artifacts was augmented by yet another unique piece, the gold pectoral (breast decoration) from the Tolstaya Mogila barrow in the Ukraine. In this heavy piece of male adornment, the upper frieze, with its scenes of Scythian daily life, blends harmoniously with exquisite ornamental designs and representations of fighting animals. This brilliant example of antique goldwork is reminiscent of many of the masterpieces described above in its treatment of images, its execution and its subject matter. As in a focal point, the pectoral brings together all the finest achievements of the Bosporan craftsmen who worked in the Graeco-Barbarian style. The craftsman has displayed his great skill in the lifelike rendering of the Scythian characters: two of them are making a sheep-skin shirt, a third, younger one, is milking a ewe and a fourth is sitting with an amphora and checking the yield. Another frieze vividly depicts horses, cows and other animals. In the variety of its imagery, the pectoral is unequalled by any other artifact from Scythian times. The images seem to have a deep symbolic meaning, yet it remains undeciphered.

*Pls. 128, 129* One of the best works of the Graeco-Barbarian style is the gold comb from the Solokha barrow. Modelled in the round, it shows three warriors engaged in battle. A mounted Scythian and his assistant are attacking a dismounted warrior. The composition reflects the culmination of the battle and the craftsman succeeds in expressing the ferocity of the struggle most convincingly. All the figures – warriors, horses and lions – as well as the reins and the armour, were chased separately for both sides, soldered together and fitted into the comb. Such perfect technique required consummate skill.

Every artifact of that period is remarkable in its own way. They may have been made on commission and hence never repeated. Therefore their historical, ethnographical and artistic value cannot be overestimated. The influence exerted by Graeco-Barbarian and Greek art on Scythian craftsmen in the fourth century B.C. contributed to the emergence of anthropomorphic images of deities and mythical heroes. The objects depicting these images were either manufactured by the Scythian craftsmen themselves or made by Greek craftsmen on commission from Scythian warriors. These two distinct artistic currents are easily traced and distinguished.

*Pls. 144, 203, 257, 258* The dominant position among the deities of the nomadic Scythians was occupied by goddesses in human form. Such a figure is generally shown seated by an altar (or on a throne) and with an interceding Scythian in front of her. There are also images of a winged goddess with the heads of fantastic beasts in her hands, a snake-legged goddess, etc.

According to Herodotus, the Scythian religious pantheon was headed by the goddess Tabiti, the guardian of the hearth (counterpart to Vesta). The Scythians also worshipped the goddess Apia (the Earth) and Argimpasa (the Sky). But it is difficult to identify which of them is represented in any given scene. The altar seems to be the attribute of the goddess Tabiti and the wings, of Argimpasa. The image of a winged creature surrounded by animals must have personified the Great Goddess, the supreme ruler of people, animals and other living creatures.

The main male deity was Targitau, the forefather of all the Scythians and the founder of their royal dynasty. Legends about Targitau are so amazingly similar to the heroic exploits of Heracles that many classical Greek authors preferred to call Targitau by the Greek name. The stone-carved statues which once surmounted the burial mounds of the Scythian royal dynasty are thought to have represented Targitau. In the minor arts, most popular were the scenes which depicted Targitau wrestling with a lion or with some monstrous fantastic beast.

In their representational and compositional principles many purely Scythian artifacts closely followed Greek prototypes, although markedly differing from them in their simple, naive and at times unskilled treatment of human figures, and in their conventionality in rendering details.

*Pl. 232* Thus, for example, a classical Greek object apparently inspired the composition of a gold plaque (appliqué) from a woman's ritual head-dress. The upper part of the triangular plaque, found in the Karagodeushkh barrow, is occupied by the image of a goddess clad in a Grecian tunic, the middle part shows a man driving a chariot and the lower part is occupied by a multigure composition: two Scythians with ritual vessels in their hands stand before a goddess, who is seated on the throne with an air of authority. The first thing that catches the eye is the motionless poses of the figures, the generalized and sketchy modelling of form and, at the same time, the tendency to realistic treatment of the subjects. The attire of the goddess resembles the ritual dress of a Scythian woman of distinction: a high, pointed, crown-shaped head-dress and a long, patterned mantle thrown over it, and a garment with puffed sleeves. The scene itself represents the common Scythian ritual of drinking sacramental wine in order to obtain the benevolence and protection of a deity.

*Pl. 136* A battle scene involving Scythian warriors is depicted on a trapezoid plaque from the Geremesov barrow. The arrangement and poses of the warriors have something in common with those on the famous Greek comb from the Solokha barrow. The ornamental frame of the plaque is also based on classical Greek motifs. But the coarse relief and the poorly proportioned figures reveal the hand of an unskilled craftsman, although his shortcomings are to a certain extent offset by his precise depiction of the events (either real or taken from the epic) and his faithful rendering of the personal attributes, which enabled his contemporaries to identify each character in his work. The craftsman depicted Scythians in Italic helmets with beavers protecting their faces, in



armour and mail, wearing Greek greaves. He shows the horse's scaly breast-plate and collar, a chamfron and bridle plaques. All the details were executed carefully and provide valuable information about Scythian weapons, armour, coats of mail and other military equipment.

Nonetheless, anthropomorphic images of gods and mythical heroes were not very popular motifs in the work of local Scythian craftsmen. In the late Scythian period (late fourth – early third centuries B.C.) zoomorphic images still dominated in decorations and adornments of garments, pole-tops and particularly in horse harness and trappings. At the same time this period is characterized by the growing influence of the Thracian artistic tradition on Scythian art. The Thracian tribes, the western neighbours of the Scythians, inhabited the Carpathian-Danube region. While the animal style came to Thrace in the sixth century B.C., obviously under the direct influence of Scythian art, a reverse process took place beginning in the mid-fourth century B.C., when Thracian works of art and Scythian imitations of them were in great demand in the steppe north of the Black Sea.

These articles were mostly silver or gold ornaments and adornments of horse harness and trappings similar to those found in the Oguz and Khomina Mogila barrows in the Ukraine. In their depictions of stags or beasts of prey, or of the heads of such animals, the Thracians focused on ornamental stylization of the image, amply using the scrolls and hatching typical of Thracian art. Pl. 143

Scythian art still retained its traditional subjects, although its stylistic means changed considerably. A large number of new compositional schemes and stylistic devices replaces the relatively limited store prescribed by the canons of Scythian art. This situation was a necessary prerequisite for greater freedom in expressing individual conceptions and tendencies. Some local craftsmen were inclined to revive the realistic approach to subjects which was typical of early Scythian art. These efforts and tendencies, for example, are embodied in sculptured figures of birds on a pole-top from the Alexandropol barrow. In the lifelike authenticity of their images, almost severe in their laconism, they are reminiscent of Scythian artifacts of the archaic period.

The art of this period, nonetheless, was dominated by a decorative trend within the framework of the Scythian animal style. Plasticity of forms gradually gave way to less flexible patterns. Figures of animals tended to become flat and often schematically treated; the relief began to be replaced by engraving. A more prominent role was assumed by openwork structures, and decorative features increasingly prevailed over the figurative aspect. In their search for more effective compositional schemes, the Scythian craftsmen, creators of the animal style, demonstrated a familiar inexhaustible inventiveness. They might convert a bridle ornament into a flattened but lavishly adorned and expressive figure of a running winged beast, while the end of a horse bit could be made to resemble an exotic flower, formed by the heads and elongated necks of three animals – a kind of faunal palmette. Pls. 276, 279

Frequently the images of animals were so densely interwoven with the elaborate linear design of the ornament that one can hardly make out the figure. This, for example, applies to a bronze pole-top from the Anapkurgan barrow. At first, perhaps, it is impossible to make out the profile of a stag's head barely marked on the boss of the pole-top. It is hidden among the enormous foliated antlers, which form an openwork pattern of intricate scrolls. A bronze chamfron ornament (a chance find purchased in Maikop) is decorated with three stags' muzzles, which are also difficult to trace, for their foliated antlers, formed by an alternation of birds' heads with various scrolls, cover the entire surface of the composition like intricate delicate lace. Pl. 285

Despite its loss of realistic features, the Scythian animal style acquired compensating qualities: subtlety of form, ingenuity of composition and exquisite decorativeness. Pl. 274

In the early third century B.C. the Sarmatian nomadic tribes invaded the Scythian territory, penetrated deep into the steppe in the lower reaches of the Dnieper river and drove the Scythians to the Crimean peninsula. There they gradually settled down and their culture, under the influence of the Greek colonies, acquired some features of urban civilization. In this period of the late Scythian kingdom (third century B.C. – third century A.D.) handicrafts gave way to monumental forms of art: sculptured tombstones, architectural monuments, frescoes, etc. In spite of a strong influence of Hellenic culture, they retained elements of the ancient Scythian tradition. Thus, the development of the Scythian animal style whose creative potential was far from being exhausted, nevertheless came to a stand-still. Pl. 272

In subsequent centuries some Scythian themes and compositions were revived in the art of various tribes and peoples of different regions. The influence of Scythian prototypes is felt in the ingenious variation of the animal style which was created by the Sarmatians between the first century B.C. and the first century A.D. Traces of Scythian motifs are also observed in the zoomorphic style of the Perm culture and in Scandinavian art of the early Middle Ages. The artistic tradition of Scythian art is also noticeable in diverse kinds of applied art (embroidery, enamels, architectural decor, etc.) of pre-Mongol Russia. All this helped to preserve for posterity the memory of the high spiritual and material culture of the former sovereigns of the southern steppes of Russia. Indeed, it is not deeds of war, but acts of creation that perpetuate the name of a people. Pl. 284

4th AND 3rd  
CENTURIES B.C.



118

Pectoral terminating with lion's heads and decorated with scenes of Scythian life in the upper frieze, fighting animals in the lower frieze and floral ornament in the middle. A masterpiece of Greek metalwork, 4th century B.C. Gold. Diameter 31 cm. Tolstaya Mogila barrow, Dnepropetrovsk Region. Excavations of B. Mozolevsky, 1971. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. No. A3C-2494

119

Pectoral: detail

118

119











120, 121

Pectoral: details

122, 123

Torque with terminals in the form of lion's heads and filigree plant ornament with coloured enamels. Graeco-Seythian, first half of the 4th century B.C. Gold and enamel. 30 x 26 cm (oval). Solokha barrow, Tauride Province (now Zaporozhye Region). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1913. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДИ 1913 1/7





**124**  
 Torque with two groups of sculptured lions and terminals in the form of foreparts of deer. Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. Diameter 18 cm. Tolstaya Mogila barrow, Dnepropetrovsk Region. Excavations of B. Mozolevsky, 1971. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. No. A3C-2603



**125**  
 Torque with terminals in the form of recumbent lions. Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. Diameter 21.8 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 2





126, 127

Torque of twisted gold wire with caps decorated with palmettes, lotus flowers and egg-and-dart ornaments, inlaid with coloured enamels. The terminals in the form of half-length facing horsemen. Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold and enamel. Diameter 25.8 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 17

126



127



128

**Comb crested with fighting Scythians.**

A masterpiece of Greek metalwork, first half of the 4th century B.C. Gold.

12.3 x 10.2 cm. Solokha barrow, Tauride Province (now Zaporozhye Region).

Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1913.

The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДИ 1913 1/1



129  
Comb: reverse side



## 130

**Ear ornament: a disk decorated with floral design and a suspended crescent with drop-shaped beads on chains.** The ends of the crescent decorated with three-layered rosettes and the stamped figure of the winged goddess Nike. A masterpiece of Greek jewellery, 4th century B.C. Gold and enamel. Length 8.8 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 7

## 131, 132

**A pair of temple pendants, part of a head-dress (see No. 135), in the form of sphinxes seated on pedestals and with ducks suspended on chains under pedestals.** Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. Length 7.2 cm (each). Deyev barrow, Tauride Province (now Kherson Region). Excavations of K. Dumberg, 1897. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДН 1897 5/2

## 133

**Ear ornament: a disk with a suspended crescent and drop-shaped beads on chains.** The disk covered with microscopic floral ornament, egg-and-dart pattern, rosettes and stamped figures of Nereids riding dolphins. Points of chain-linking decorated with rosettes and inlaid with coloured enamels. A masterpiece of Greek jewellery, 4th century B.C. Gold and enamel. Length 9.5 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 6

## 134

**Temple pendant: a disk with relief head of Athena in a helmet with three crests supported by a sphinx and two winged horses and little griffins at its cheek-pieces.** Attached to the disk is a tracery of twisted chains bearing drop-shaped ornaments decorated with filigree. Points of chain-linking decorated with rosettes and plaques inlaid with coloured enamels. A masterpiece of Greek jewellery, 4th century B.C. Gold and enamel. Length 17.5 cm, diameter of disk 7 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 5



135

Ritual woman's head-dress  
(reconstructed), made of gold bands with  
relief floral ornament, plaques in the  
shape of dancing Maenads, holding  
thyrsi and swords, and drop-shaped  
beads. Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C.  
Gold. Length 40 cm. Deyev barrow,  
Tauride Province (now Kherson Region).  
Excavations of K. Dumberg, 1897. The  
Hermitage. Inv. Nos. ДИ 1897 5/3-6, 83







136

Trapezoid plaque with a relief scene of fighting Scythian warriors. Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. 14 x 19 cm. Geremesov barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Zaporozhye Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1859. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДИ 1859 1/2

137

Pin of wire with double loop at the top surmounted by a bird. Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. Length 8 cm. Kul-Oba barrow (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 42

138, 140, 141

Ornamental plaques for a garment of a Scythian chieftain with embossed figures of a stag, a lion and a lion tearing a stag's head. Scythian, first half of the 4th century B.C. Gold. 2.3 x 2.1 cm, 2 x 2.8 cm, 2.6 x 3 cm. Solokha barrow, Tauride Province (now Zaporozhye Region). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1913. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. ДИ 1913 1/45, 15, 14

139

Sewn-on plaque from a garment: head of the Gorgon Medusa. Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. Diameter 2.6 cm. Toistaya Mogila barrow, Dnepropetrovsk Region. Excavations of B. Mozolevsky, 1971. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. No. A3C-2476

136



137

138 139



140 141







142

**142**

Sewn-on plaque from a vestment with a brotherhood ritual: two facing Scythians drinking from the same rhyton. Scythian, first half of the 4th century B.C. Gold. 2.5 x 2.5 cm. Solokha barrow, Tauride Province (now Zaporozhye Region). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1913. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДИ 1913 1/42

**143**

Bridle set: nose decoration in the form of sculptured head of a beast and beast's heads at the base of its neck; cheek-pieces with engraved images of a recumbent stag and lions; phalera with sculptured heads of beasts of prey and stylized animal heads at the sides. Scythian-Thracian, 4th century B.C. Silver. Height: 4.2 cm (nose decoration) 9.5 cm (cheek-pieces), 3.7 cm (phalera). Oguz barrow, Tauride Province (now Kherson Region). Excavations of V. Roth, 1902. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. ДИ 1902 1/85, 86, 87



144

Overlays for a wooden bridle set: chamfron with serpent-legged Scythian goddess Api and two cheek-pieces in the form of bird's wings. Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. Height: 41.4 cm (chamfron), 17.8 cm and 18.2 cm (cheek-pieces). Bolshaya Tsybalka barrow, Tauride Province (now Zaporozhye Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1868. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. ДИ 1868 1/8-10



145

145

Iron belt clasp with a gold plaque depicting two heads of a beast with long ears and many-toothed mouth. Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. 3.7 x 13 cm. Chastiye barrows, tumulus 3, Voronezh Province (now Voronezh Region). Excavations of S. Zverev, A. Martinovich and V. Yazykov, 1911. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДИ 1911 1/13



146

**Belt clasp: a recumbent animal with its head turned back.** Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. 3.9 x 8.7 cm. Mastiugino barrow 1, Voronezh Province (now Voronezh Region). Excavations of A. Spitsyn, 1905. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДІо 1/73

147

**Overlays for wooden pieces of horse harness: chamfron in the form of two fishes and two cheek-pieces in the shape of bird's wings.** Scythian, first half of the 4th century B.C. Gold. Height: 38.8 cm (chamfron), 19.5 cm (cheek-pieces). Solokha barrow, Tauride Province (now Zaporozhye Region). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1912. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. ДІІ 1912 1/42-44



148

**Pole-top with a double-sided scene of Targiteus fighting with a fantastic monster devouring a beast.** Scythian, 4th century B.C. Bronze. 16.3 x 8.6 cm. Slonovskaya Bliznitsa barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1861. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДН 1861 1/2



149

**Openwork pole-top crowned with sculptured figure of a griffin.** Scythian, 4th century B.C. Bronze. Height 13.8 cm. Tolstaya Mogila barrow, Dnepropetrovsk Region. Excavations of B. Mozolevsky, 1971. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. No. A3C-2555

150

**Iron sword and gold scabbard.** Overlays of the hilt and scabbard decorated with scenes of fighting animals. Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold and iron. Length; 62 cm (sword), 53 cm (scabbard). Tolstaya Mogila barrow, Dnepropetrovsk Region. Excavations of B. Mozolevsky, 1971. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. No. A3C-2493



151

Sword hilt: detail

152-154

Scabbard: details



151





152 153



154



155

**Scabbard with relief figures of lions tearing stag's heads.** Scythian, first half of the 4th century B.C. Gold. Length 59 cm, width 12.8 cm. Solokha barrow, Tauride Province (now Zaporozhye Region). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1913. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДИ 1913 1/8

155

156  
Scabbard: detail







157, 158, 160  
Vessel: details

157





159

**159**  
 Scythian ritual vessel with horizontal handles in the form of ram's heads. Body of the vessel ornamented with a relief frieze of mounted Scythians chasing lions and a fantastic horned lioness. Greek, first half of the 4th century B.C. Silver-gilt. Height 13 cm, diameter 18.7 cm. Solokha barrow, Tauride Province (now Zaporozhye Region). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1913. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДН 1913 1/40



160

158



161

Cast cauldron of the Scythian type with relief ornament of zigzag patterns, bucrania (bull's heads) and palmettes. Scythian, early 4th century B.C. Bronze. Height 47 cm, diameter 39 cm. Raskopana Mogila barrow, Tauride Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of D. Evarnitsky, 1897. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДИ 1897 2/14

161

162





162

Phiale: detail

163

Phiale decorated with three bands of friezes with lions attacking stags and horses. Graeco-Scythian, first half of the 4th century B.C. Gold. Diameter 21.8 cm. Solokha barrow, Tauride Province (now Zaporozhye Region). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1913. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДИ 1913 1/48



Phiale decorated with relief masks of the Gorgon Medusa, bearded Sileni, wild boars, bees, dolphins and fishes. Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. Diameter 23.1 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 31





**Scythian ritual vessel with relief images of Scythian nobles and their servants.**

The handles in the form of ram's heads. A masterpiece of Greek metalwork, 4th century B.C. Silver, parcel-gilt. Height 9.7 cm, diameter 10.5 cm. Gaimanova Mogila barrow, Zaporozhye Region. Excavations of V. Bidzili, 1969-70. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. No. A3C-2358



167-170  
Ritual vessel: details









171



172



171-173

**Scythian ceremonial vessel with relief images of Scythian warriors.** A masterpiece of Greek metalwork, 4th century B.C. Silver-gilt. Height 9 cm, diameter 9.5 cm. Chastiye barrows, tumulus 3, Voronezh Province (now Voronezh Region). Excavations of S. Zverev, A. Martinovich and V. Yazykov, 1911. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Дн 1911 1/11

173

174

Iron knife with gold hilt decorated with relief images of beasts of prey on both sides. Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold and iron. Length 18.5 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavation of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 35

174



175

175

Whetstone in a mounting (attached to a warrior's belt) decorated with filigree patterns of palmettes, lotuses, volutes and ornamental bands. Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold and stone. Length 11.7 cm. Talayev barrow near Simferopol (now Crimean Region). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1891. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Kp 1891 1/25

176

Whetstone in a mounting decorated with filigree patterns of rosettes, lotuses, palmettes and ornamental bands. Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold and stone. Length 17.3 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 36



176

177

Whetstone in a mounting decorated with filigree patterns of palmettes, lotuses and ornamental bands. Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold and stone. Length 18.6 cm. Malaya Bliznitsa barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of S. Verebriusov, 1862. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Мал. Б 14

178

Mirror in the form of a disk, with relief floral ornaments by its handle covered with gold overlay bearing chased figures of griffins and animals. Graeco-Scythian (the disk of Greek and the overlay of Scythian workmanship), 5th or 4th century B.C. Gold and bronze. Diameter of disk 15.5 cm, overall height 31.5 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 9







179

**179**

A pair of bracelets with unconnected ends: two-layered gold plates decorated with two bands of friezes depicting a repeated scene of griffins tearing a stag. The ends decorated with lion masks. Greek, 4th century B.C. Gold. Diameter 8 cm, 8.8 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. K-O 3, 4



181

**180**

Two-layered bracelet with relief images from Greek mythology and appliqué rosettes on the outer ring. Greek, 4th century B.C. Gold. Diameter 10.1 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 18

180



**181**

Upper part of a head-dress in the form of a double-layered plaque with unconnected ends, shaped as a cylinder and depicting a seated woman amidst vegetative and floral ornaments (repeated 4 times). Greek, 4th century B.C. Gold. Height 7.7 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 16



182

Twisted bracelet (bronze base covered with gold leaf) with terminals in the form of sculptured half-length figures of sphinxes. Greek, 4th century B.C. Gold, bronze and enamel. Diameter 10.1 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 19

183

Diadem: chased plaque with sphinxes and griffins in heraldic arrangement. Greek, 4th century B.C. Gold. Length 33 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 35

182

183





### 184-187

Scythian ritual vessel with scenes of Scythian mythology and with ornaments in the lower part. A masterpiece of Greek metalwork, 4th century B.C. Electrum. Height 13 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 11

184

185









188, 189

Scythian ritual vessel with a gilt frieze of ducks catching fish. Greek, 4th century B.C. Silver-gilt. Height 12.5 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 96





190-192

Scythian ritual vessel with a panther and a lion and a lioness attacking a stag. Scythian (with West Asian elements), second half of the 4th century B.C. Silver. Height 10.1 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 98



191



192



193-195

Scythian ritual vessel with a gilt frieze of three scenes: a lion and a lioness rending a stag, two griffins attacking an ibex and a lion tearing a boar. Greek, 4th century B.C. Silver-gilt. Height 10.3 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 97



194

195



196

Plaque with a brotherhood ritual scene in high relief: two Scythians drinking from the same rhyton. Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold, 5 x 3.7 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 41



197



198



197

Rectangular plaque: a mounted Scythian chasing a hare. Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold, 4.3 x 5.2 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 48

199

198

**Plaque: a standing Scythian holding a round-bottomed vessel and with a quiver on his left hip.** Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. 6.3 x 3.2 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 38

199

**Plaque: two Scythians shooting from their bows.** Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. 4.1 x 2.8 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 35



200

**Phalera: chased plaque with two Greek warriors fighting a mounted Amazon.** Greek, 4th century B.C. Bronze. Diameter 9.4 cm. Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1864. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ББ 80

201

**Phalera: applied chased plaque with a relief representing of a Greek warrior fighting two Amazons.** Greek, 4th century B.C. Bronze. Diameter 8.7 cm. Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1864. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ББ 78



202

**Plaque: a Scythian horseman.** Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. 3.8 x 4.6 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 49

203

**Plaque: a snake-legged winged goddess with a bearded male head in her hand.** Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. 2.4 x 3.3 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 70

204

**Rectangular plaque: Pegasus.** Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. 5.3 x 5.4 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 46



203 204



205, 206, 210

**Rectangular plaques, each with the figure of a hare.** Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. 1.5 x 2 cm (each). Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 52



205 206



207

**Plaque: a hippocampus.** Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. 4.7 x 5.1 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 63



209

208

208

**Plaque from a vestment: a winged goddess with branched-off scrolls instead of legs and with palmette.** Greek, 4th century B.C. Gold. 5.3 x 5.3 cm. Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1864. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ББ 49

209

**Plaque from a vestment: a dancing woman wearing a short tunic and holding a calathus.** Greek, 4th century B.C. Gold. 3.6 x 1.8 cm. Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1864. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ББ 52



210

211

**Rhyton with a ram terminal.** Scythian, 4th century B.C. Silver. Height 12.3 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 104

211



212

**Torque terminal: head of a lion.** The cap is decorated with a frieze of palmettes and lotus flowers inlaid with blue and green enamels. Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold and enamel. 2.8 x 4.7 cm. Kul-Oba barrow, near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 121



212



214



215

213

**Shield plaque: a stag.** On the body, additional motifs: a griffin, a hare, a lion and a dog. The antlers terminate in a ram's head, the tail, in a bird's head. Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. 16 x 31.5 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 120

214, 215

**Two overlays of a folding comb carved with hunting scenes: a dog chasing a hare; a Scythian fallen from a galloping horse.** Scythian, 4th century B.C. Bone. 1.8 x 9.1 cm. Kul-Oba barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Excavations of P. Dubrux, 1830. The Hermitage. Inv. No. K-O 118

216

Greaves. Greek, 4th century B.C. Bronze. Height 45 cm (each). Ilyinetskaya barrow 493, Kiev Province (now Vinnitsa Region). Excavations of N. Brandenburg, 1901. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДИ 1932 72/1-2

217

Horse bits, each with a carved stag's head in a rectangular frame at one end and a sculptured hoof at the other.

Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Bronze. Length 12.8 cm, frame 5.5 x 4.3 cm (each). Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1864. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ББ 77

217





**218**

**Breast-plate: head of the Gorgon Medusa.** Greek, 4th century B.C. Bronze. 41 x 44 cm. Yelizavetinskaya barrow 5, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1914. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1914 8/1

**219**

**Overlay of a sword scabbard with relief figures of a wild boar, a lion and another lion with a 180° inversion of its hind part.** The side extension bears a scene of a lion tearing a stag's head. Scythian, second half of the 4th century B.C. Gold. Length 57 cm, width 9 cm. Side part: length 23.2 cm, width 8.8 cm. Ushakov barrow (No. 16) near Yelizavetovskaya, the Don Cossack area (now Rostov Region). Excavations of I. Ushakov, 1901. The Hermitage. Inv. No. TE 1901 1

220

**Hilt of a sword with two sculptured heads of calves turned in opposite directions, relief images of horsemen hunting an ibex and an ornament of stylized lotus flowers.** Achaemenid, late 5th century B.C. Gold and iron. 15 x 5.5 cm. Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1863. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДИ 1863 1/448

221, 222

**Overlay of a wooden scabbard showing Greeks engaged in battle with Barbarians (Amazons) and a scene of a griffin tearing a stag's head (on the extension).** Greek, last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Gold. Length 54.4 cm, width with extension 16.5 cm. Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1863. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДИ 1863 1/447



221







223

**Diadem with relief figures of lions, panthers and floral ornaments.** Attached to its lower edge are plaques with drop-like pendants. Graeco-Scythian, second half of the 4th century B.C. Gold. Length 51 cm, width 4 cm. Three Brothers barrows near Kerch (Crimean Region). Excavations of D. Kirillin, 1965. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. No. A3C-2267

223



224, 225

Overlay of a Scythian gorytus with relief images of fighting animals, antique floral patterns and scenes from the life of Achilles. Greek, last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Gold. 27.3 x 46.8 cm. Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1863. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДН 1863 1/435

224



225





226, 227  
Calathus: details





228

**Calathus decorated with chased plates depicting Barbarians fighting griffins.** In the upper part, egg-and-dart ornaments; lower, a meander and rosettes inlaid with blue enamel. Greek, 4th century B.C. Gold and enamel. Diameter of upper part 26 cm. Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1864. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ББ 29

229

**Openwork cone-shaped head-dress decorated with volutes and floral designs.** Greek, 4th century B.C. Gold. Height 14.4 cm, diameter 19.5 cm. Ak-Burun barrow near Kerch (now Crimean Region). Chance find, 1875. The Hermitage. Inv. No. АК-Б 28





230

**Filigree necklace: a braid with three rows of pendants on chains attached by plaques and rosettes. The clasps adorned with lion's heads in high relief. Greek, 4th century B.C. Gold and enamel. Length 34 cm. Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1864. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ББ 34**

230

231

**Parts of two belt clasps with filigree patterns in the form of Heracles' knots, rosettes, palmettes, scrolls and disks inlaid with blue enamel. Greek, late 4th century B.C. Gold and enamel. Heights 4.1, 4.7 cm. Kurjip barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Sysoyev, 1896. The Hermitage. Inv. No. 2495/94, 95**

231



Adornment of a female ritual head-dress with relief compositions: in the upper part, a goddess draped in a classical tunic; in the middle, a man driving a chariot; below, a ritual scene of libation. Scythian, late 4th century B.C. Gold. Height 21 cm. Karagodeuashkh barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of E. Felitsyn, 1888. The Hermitage. Inv. No. 2492/7



233

**Ritual head-dress of a high-born Scythian woman (reconstructed).** The gold plaques (sewn on the fabric or leather base), decorated in relief with floral ornaments, scenes of fighting animals and images of lions, griffins, birds, grasshoppers and bees. Graeco-Scythian, last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Gold. Height 25 cm. Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1863. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. Дн 1863 1/217, 219, 233

233





234

**234**  
 A pair of bracelets: bronze plaits covered with gold leaves and decorated with sculptured figures of lionesses at the ends. Greek, 4th century B.C. Gold and bronze with traces of enamel. Diameter 7.3 cm (each). Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1864. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. ББ 35, 36

**235**  
 Torque decorated with sculptured figures of lions and applied jagged ornament. Scythian, last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Gold. Diameter 15.7 cm. Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1863. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДН 1863 1/187

235





**236, 237**

**Torque: smooth rope with terminals decorated with filigree ornaments and sculptured heads of lions.** Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. Diameter 23 cm. Talayev barrow near Simferopol (now Crimean Region). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1891. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Kp 1981 1/26



**239**

**Torque with sculptured figures of lions at both ends.** Scythian, last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Gold. 13.1 x 14.8 cm (oval). Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1863. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДИ 1863 1/187

**240**

**Torque decorated with ring-shaped bands, with sculptured scenes of a lion tearing a boar at both ends.** Graeco-Scythian, late 4th century B.C. Gold. 17.3 x 19 cm (oval). Karagodeuashkh barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of E. Felitsyn, 1888. The Hermitage. Inv. No. 2492/32







239



240



238, 241

Torque with sculptured heads of antelopes at both ends and overlaying plates decorated with filigree patterns of lotuses, disks and ornamental bands. Graeco-Scythian, late 4th century B.C. Gold and enamel. Diameter 15 cm. Kurjip barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Sysoyev, 1896. The Hermitage. Inv. No. 2495/119

241

242

**Bead decorated with human faces (masks) on three sides.** Scythian, late 4th century B.C. Paste. Height 3.3 cm. Karagodeuashkh barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of E. Felitsyn, 1888. The Hermitage. Inv. No. 2492/28



243

**Two breast ornaments, each with two plaques depicting a griffin attacking a man and six rows of pendants.** Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. Length with pendants 16.8 cm (each). Novoselitsy barrow 4, Kiev Province (now Cherkassy Region). Excavations of A. Bidlovsky, 1904. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. No. ДМ-6434



244

**Finger-ring of semitransparent glass.** In the bezel, inlaid gold figure of a female dancer wearing a calathus. Unknown origin, last third of the 4th century B.C. Glass and gold. 2.4 x 2.1 cm (oval). Kurjip barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of V. Sysoyev, 1896. The Hermitage. Inv. No. 2495/70

244



247, 248

**Crescent-shaped ear-rings, decorated with granulated triangles and sculptured figurines of ducks at the ends and suspended on chains.** Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. Length 8 cm (each). Novoselitsy barrow 4, Kiev Province (now Cherkassy Region). Excavations of A. Bidlovsky, 1905. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. Nos. ДМ-6169, 6171

246

248

245

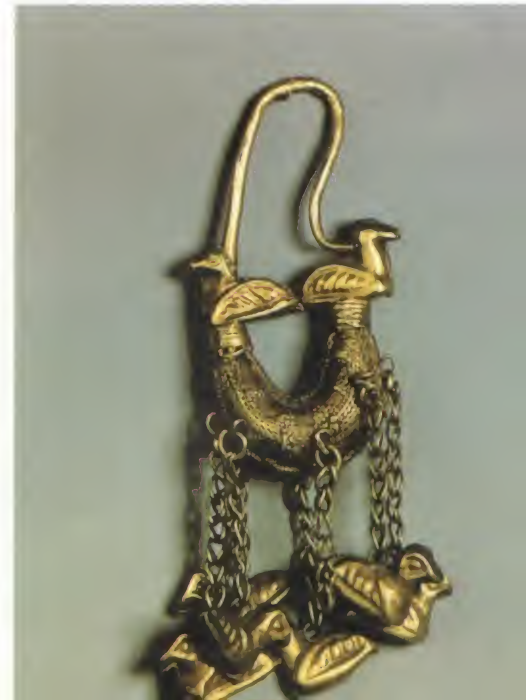
**Temple pendants: seated sphinxes.** The details inlaid with blue and green enamels. Graeco-Scythian, second half of the 4th century B.C. Gold and enamel. Length 4.7 cm (each). Three Brothers barrow, Crimean Region. Excavations of D. Kirillin, 1965. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. No. А3С-2273

246

**Signet-rings with overlapping and unconnected ends of the arcs.** On the bezels, engravings of a bull and a dog gnawing a bone. Graeco-Scythian, last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Gold. 2.3 x 2.5 cm (oval). Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1863. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. Дн 1863 1/384, 385



247





249

Necklace of relief plaques showing Demeter's head, and pendants. Graeco-Scythian, 4th century B.C. Gold. Length 20 cm. Novoselitsy barrow 4, Kiev Province (now Cherkassy Region). Excavations of A. Bidlovsky, 1904. Museum of Ancient Ornaments, Kiev. Inv. Nos. JIM-6438, 6451

249

251

A pair of temple ornaments, each consisting of a disk and a tracery of chains with filigree pendants. The disk is decorated with a relief figure of a Nereid riding a hippocampus and holding the armour of Achilles. The points of chain-linking masked with plaques, rosettes and leaves. Greek, 4th century B.C. Length 15.5 cm (each). Gold and enamel. Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1864. The Hermitage. Inv. No. BB 31

250

Two spiral-shaped link bracelets, each with relief figures of hippocampi at the ends. Greek, late 4th century B.C. Gold. Diameter 7 cm (each). Karagodeuashkh barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of E. Felitsyn, 1888. The Hermitage. Inv. No. 2492/5

250





## 252, 253

Temple pendants from a ritual woman's head-dress, each in the form of sculptured figure of a seated sphinx.

Graeco-Scythian, last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Electrum and silver. 2.5 x 2 cm (each). Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1863. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. ДН 1863 1/257, 258





254

**Necklace of beads, filigree plaques and pendants.** In the centre, sculptured figurine of a bull used as perfume holder. The clasps embellished with palmettes. Greek, late 4th century B.C. Gold. Length 45 cm. Karagodeuashkh barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of E. Felitsyn, 1888. The Hermitage. Inv. No. 2492/2

254

256



255, 256

Crescent-shaped pectoral with fifteen sculptured figurines of animals (goats, rams, dogs and hares) and filigree flowers and petals between two twisted plaits. The clasps in the form of relief heads of lions. Greek, 4th century B.C. Gold and enamel. Outer diameter 18.4 cm. Bolshaya Bliznitsa barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of A. Liutsenko, 1869. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ББ 115



257, 258

Plaques from a woman's costume with ritual scenes of libation: Scythians drinking sacramental wine in front of goddesses. Graeco-Scythian, last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Gold. 3 x 3.1 cm, 3.6 x 3.9 cm. Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1863. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. Дн 1863 1/172, 374a



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260



258



261



## 259

**Plaque from a costume with relief image of the Gorgon Medusa and drop-like pendants.** Graeco-Scythian, last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Gold. Diameter 4.8 cm. Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1863. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДН 1863 1/229

## 260

**Openwork plaque: a winged goddess with half-length figures of animals in her hands.** The iron base covered with gold leaf on the obverse side and with silver on the reverse. Scythian, early 3rd century B.C. Iron, gold and silver. 10 x 12 cm. Alexandropol barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Chance find, 1851. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДН 1851 1/1

## 261, 263

**Two plaques from a costume: one with a scene of Heracles strangling the lion, the other with a Scythian fighting a griffin.** Graeco-Scythian, last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Gold. Diameter 2.2 cm (left); 2.6 x 2.6 cm (right). Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1863. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. ДН 1863 1/241, 220

## 262

**Bridle set: nose decoration in the form of a sculptured animal head, cheek-pieces with engraved images of birds and ornaments, and smooth round plaques with eyelets on the reverse.** Scythian, last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Gold. Height: 5.5 cm (nose decoration), 8.2 cm (cheek-pieces); diameter of plaques 5 and 5.6 cm. Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1863. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. ДН 1863 1/90-92, 95

## 264

**Plaque from a costume: a recumbent griffin.** Graeco-Scythian, last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Gold. 2.7 x 2.9 cm. Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1863. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДН 1863 1/144



Amphora decorated with floral ornaments, birds and scenes of griffins tearing a spotted deer. Faucets in the form of sculptured heads of lions (two) and of a hippocampus (one). The upper band of friezes depicts Scythians taming wild horses. A unique specimen of Greek metalwork, last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Silver-gilt. Height 70 cm, maximum diameter 40 cm. Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1863. The Hermitage. Inv. No. ДН 1863 1/166





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Amphora: details

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**Brazier (or meat skimmer) with openwork sides and bottom and a boss for the handle.** Scythian, last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Bronze. Height 11.6 cm. Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1862. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Дн 1862 2/26

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**Cast cauldron of Scythian type with six handles in the form of sculptured goats.** Scythian, last quarter of the 4th century B.C. Bronze. Height 107 cm, diameter 68 cm. Chertomlyk barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of I. Zabelin, 1863. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Дн 1863 1/362



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**Pole-top: an openwork figure of a stag.**  
Scythian, late 4th century B.C. Bronze.  
Height 15.7 cm. Chertomlyk barrow,  
Yekaterinoslav Province (now  
Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations  
of I. Zabelin, 1862. The Hermitage.  
Inv. No. Дн 1862 2/31

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**Pole-top surmounted by an openwork  
stag's head with ornamentally treated  
antlers.** Scythian, late 4th century B.C.  
Bronze and iron. 21.8 x 11.5 cm.  
Anapkurgan barrow near Maikop, the  
Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory)  
Chance find, 1900. The Hermitage.  
Inv. No. 2500/1



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**Pole-top surmounted with an ibex.**  
 Scythian, 4th century B.C. Bronze. 15.3 x 13.8 cm. Chmyreva Mogila barrow near the village of Bolshaya Belozerka, Tauride Province (now Zaporozhye Region). Excavations of F. Brown, 1898. The Hermitage Inv. No. ДИ 1898 1/328

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**Openwork ornament of a bridle bit: three heads of beasts on elongated necks.** Scythian, late 4th century B.C. Bronze. 8.3 x 7.6 cm. Yelizavetinskaya barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1917. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1917 1/251



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**Horse bit: stylized head of a wild boar.** Scythian, 4th century B.C. Bronze. Length 16 cm. Necropolis at Tuzla, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of K. Begichev, 1852. The Hermitage. Inv. No. T 1852 88

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**Horse bits, each decorated with openwork plaques in the form of a bull's head with branching horns.** Scythian, 4th century B.C. Bronze. Height 10.3 cm (each). Necropolis at Tuzla, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of K. Begichev, 1852. The Hermitage. Inv. No. T 1852 64



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**Two plaques from a bridle set in the form of an animal's front paw.** Scythian, 4th century B.C. Bronze. 4.6 x 7.1 cm (each). Necropolis at Tuzla, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of K. Begichev, 1852. The Hermitage. Inv. No. T 1852 77



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**Bridle plaques: an animal's hindquarters (left) and a beast's front paw (right).** Scythian, 4th century B.C. 7.4 x 5.8 cm, 7.2 x 4.8 cm. Necropolis at Tuzla, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of K. Begichev, 1852. The Hermitage. Inv. Nos. T 1852 76, 78

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Horse bits, each decorated with openwork plaques in the form of a stag's head with branching horns. Scythian, 4th century B.C. Bronze. Height of plaques 11.2 cm. Necropolis at Tuzla, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of K. Begichev, 1852. The Hermitage. Inv. No. T 1852 63



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Horse bit: half-length figure of a griffin at one end and a bird's paw at the other. Scythian, 4th century B.C. Bronze. Length 11.5 cm. Necropolis at Tuzla, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of K. Begichev, 1852. The Hermitage. Inv. No. T 1852 62

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281-283

Chamfron: a stem with a ram's head at one end and a sculptured head of a lion at the other. Scythian, 4th century B.C. Bronze. Length 20.2 cm. Necropolis at Tuzla, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of K. Begichev, 1852. The Hermitage. Inv. No. T 1852 59



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**Bridle ornament: stag's heads with stylized antlers.** Scythian, 4th century B.C. Bronze. 5.6 x 17.5 cm. Chance find, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Purchased in Maikop in 1906. The Hermitage. Inv. No. 2507/2



**Bridle ornament: a running fantastic beast.** Scythian, 4th century B.C. Bronze. 3.4 x 13.5 cm. Yelizavetinskaya barrow, the Kuban area (now Krasnodar Territory). Excavations of N. Veselovsky, 1917. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Ky 1917 1/173

286

**Pole-top: a winged goddess.** Scythian, early 3rd century B.C. Bronze. 15.7 x 8.6 cm. Alexandropol barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Chance find, 1851. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Дн 1851 1/15



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**Pole-top: a walking griffin in a rectangular frame with suspended bells.** Scythian, early 3rd century B.C. Bronze. 15.5 x 10 cm. Alexandropol barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Excavations of Tereshchenko, 1853. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Дн 1853 1/3

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**Pole-top: a trident crowned on its tips by sculptured figures of birds with little bells in their beaks.** Scythian, early 3rd century B.C. Bronze. 28.9 x 28.5 cm. Alexandropol barrow, Yekaterinoslav Province (now Dnepropetrovsk Region). Chance find, 1851. The Hermitage. Inv. No. Дн 1851 1/17

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*The vast Soviet collections of antiquities in the so-called Scythian animal style, which is unique in its refinement and expressiveness, are known throughout the world. Of special interest are the masterpieces of ancient relief metalwork with Scythian motifs and objects in the Graeco-Barbarian style manufactured in the Greek colonies on the shores of the Pontus Euxinus (Black Sea). Also noteworthy are the extremely rare works of art brought by the Scythians from Greece and Asia Minor, as well as the artifacts executed in the mixed Urartian-Scythian style or in the Oriental-Hellenic manner. The Scythian artistic treasures are not only the pride of the Soviet people, but are of interest for art lovers throughout the world.*

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